

**ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 7, 2021) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kevin Coleman of St. Mary's High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year**. Coleman is the first Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Mary's High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Coleman as Missouri's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Coleman joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas) and Christian McCaffrey (2012-13 & 2013-14, Valor Christian High School, Colo.).

The 5-foot-11, 175-pound senior wide receiver had led the Dragons to an 11-1 record and a berth in the Class 3 state championship game at the time of his selection. Coleman caught 34 passes for 888 yards and 15 touchdowns through 12 games, averaging 26.1 yards per catch. He also rushed for 423 yards and six touchdowns on 36 carries, and returned five punts for TDs. A three-time First Team All-State honoree, he has been selected to play in the 2022 All-American Bowl and is ranked as the nation's No. 25 recruit in the Class of 2022 by Rivals.

Coleman has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football camps. "I've coached for 21 years and Kevin Coleman is the best player we've competed against," said Judd Naeger, head coach at Valley Catholic High School. "He has tremendous body control and speed, and the best ball skills that I've ever seen, in person or on film."

Coleman has maintained a 3.54 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Coleman joins recent Gatorade Missouri Football Players of the Year Mekhi Wingo (2020-21, De Smet Jesuit High School), Isaiah Davis (2019-20, Joplin High School), and Isaiah Williams (2018-19 & 2017-18, Trinity Catholic High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Coleman has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Coleman is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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