

**LINCOLN EAST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 **Noah Walters of Lincoln East High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Nebraska Football Player of the Year**. Walters is the second Gatorade Nebraska Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln East 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 Walters as Nebraska'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, Walters 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 6-foot-1, 195-pound senior quarterback passed for 44 touchdowns and a Class A record 3,402 yards this past season, leading the Spartans (6-4) to the Class A state tournament. Walters completed 187 of 281 passes with just five interceptions, and his 340.2 passing yards per game is an all-class 11-man state record. A member of the Lincoln Journal Star Super-State First Team, he was also named captain of the All-City team.

A devoted member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Walters has volunteered locally on behalf of the National Honor Society and the We Are Sparta student-leadership group. "Noah Walters is absolutely outstanding," said Dan Martin, head coach at Lincoln Northeast High School. "His decision-making process is elite and he always puts the ball in the right place. I think he's the best quarterback I've seen, period."

Walters has maintained a 4.02 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.

Walters joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Football Players of the Year Cole Payton (2020-21, Westside High School), Jevyon Ducker (2019-20, Bellevue West High School), Nick Henrich (2018-19, Burke High School), and Milton Sargbah (2017-18, Omaha North 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, Walters 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. Walters 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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