

**OCEANSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Charlie McKee of Oceanside High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year**. McKee is the first Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Oceanside 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 McKee as New York'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, McKee 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, 205-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,183 yards and 28 touchdowns this past season, leading the Sailors (9-2) to the Nassau County Class AA championship game. McKee completed 168 of 227 passes (74 percent) with just two interceptions and also rushed for 781 yards and 17 touchdowns on 105 carries. A three-time All-State and All-Long Island selection, as a junior he won the Thorp Award, which is given to the top player in Nassau County. McKee concluded his prep career with 8,930 passing yards and 91 touchdowns through the air. Both totals rank fourth in state history.

McKee has volunteered locally on behalf of food-donation drives, youth football teams and his school's Best Buddies program. "Charlie McKee is a prototypical quarterback," said Frank Baglivo, head coach at East Meadow High School. "He's just about automatic within 20 yards and he can throw it 50-55 yards in the air with accuracy. He's a big, strong athlete who can also run the ball. He's just an unbelievable player, and a great person as well."

McKee has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football at Stony Brook University next fall.

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.

McKee joins recent Gatorade New York Football Players of the Year Clevmer Lubin (2020-21, Suffern High School), Israel Abanikanda (2019-20, Abraham Lincoln High School), Trevor Yeboah-Kodie (2018-19, Garden City High School), and Jeremy Ruckert (2017-18, Lindenhurst 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, McKee 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. McKee 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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