

**HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Jacob Knuth of Harrisburg High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year**. Knuth is the first Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrisburg 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 Knuth as South Dakota'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, Knuth 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-4, 205-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,413 yards and 26 touchdowns this past season, leading the Tigers (12-0) to the Class 11AAA state championship. Knuth completed 161 of 253 passes with just five interceptions, while also rushing for 518 yards and 15 touchdowns on 100 carries. Captain of the Argus Leader Elite 45 team, he is a two-time All-Conference selection.

A devoted member of his church's youth ministry, Knuth has volunteered locally on behalf of Kids Against Hunger, St. Francis House, the Good Samaritan Society and LifeScape, which provides assistance to children and adults with special needs. "Knuth has a big frame, a good arm and he plays really good football," said Mike Scott, head coach at Stevens High School. "He makes great reads and good decisions and he can make all the throws. He seems like a very good leader for that team too."

Knuth has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Knuth joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Football Players of the Year Tate Johnson (2020-21, Brandon Valley High School), Garrett Stout (2019-20, T.F. Riggs High School), Canyon Bauer (2018-19, O'Gorman High School), and Seth Benson (2017-18, Washington 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, Knuth 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. Knuth 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.