

**LOS ALAMITOS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 6, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Malachi Nelson** of **Los Alamitos High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade California Football Player of the Year**. Nelson is the second Gatorade California Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Los Alamitos 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 Nelson as California’s best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Nelson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Trevor Lawrence (2018-19 & 2016-17, Cartersville High School, Ga.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas) and Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.).

Also the state’s 2020-21 Gatorade Player of the Year as a sophomore, the 6-foot-3, 180-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,898 yards and 35 touchdowns this past season, leading the Griffins (9-3) to the Southern Section Division 1 postseason semifinals. Ranked as the nation’s No.1 recruit in the Class of 2023 by ESPN.com, Nelson is a 2023 Under Armour Next All-America Game invitee. He concluded his prep football career with 7,988 passing yards and 105 touchdowns.

Nelson has volunteered locally as a youth football coach, and he has donated a portion of his name, image and likeness agreement compensation to Los Alamitos Pop Warner for equipment, uniforms and player fees. “Malachi is an extremely rare talent who can make any throw on the field,” said Jeff Grady, head coach of Edison High School. “At times, he made very difficult throws look easy.”

Nelson has maintained a 3.35 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Nelson inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for him to enroll at the University of Southern California. He graduated from high school in December and will attend classes in the spring semester.

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.

Two-time winner Nelson joins recent Gatorade California Football Players of the Year Tetairoa McMillan (2021-22, Servite High School), Bryce Young (2019-20, Mater Dei High School), and DJ Uiagalelei (2018-19, St. John Bosco High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade’s Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade’s social impact partners, supporting Gatorade’s ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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