

**CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 **Blake Purchase** of **Cherry Creek High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year**. Purchase is the first Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Cherry Creek 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 Purchase as Colorado’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, Purchase 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.).

The 6-foot-4, 240-pound senior defensive back and linebacker led the Bruins to a 12-2 record and a fourth-straight Class 5A state championship this past season. Purchase recorded 68 tackles, 18 sacks, 12 tackles for a loss and forced two fumbles. In Cherry Creek High School’s 24-17 win over Valor Christian High School in the state final, he made 11 tackles, forced a fumble and scored a 4-yard rushing touchdown. Ranked as the nation’s No. 135 recruit in the Class of 2023 by 247Sports.com, he was also the 2022 MaxPreps.com State Player of the Year.

Purchase has volunteered locally as a youth football and basketball camp counselor, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. “Blake has been a force on the football field for his entire, four-year high school career,” said Justin Jajczyk, head coach of Cherokee Trail High School. “The growth and improvement he has shown has been nothing short of dominant. He has such a huge impact on game plans as well as the outcome of each game he plays. You have to know where No. 12 is on the field at all times.”

Purchase has maintained a B average in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he’d made a verbal commitment to play football on scholarship at the University of Oregon this 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.

Purchase joins recent Gatorade Colorado Football Players of the Year Gavin Sawchuk (2021-22 & 2020-21, Valor Christian High School), Tanner Hollens (2019-20, Columbine High School), and Aidan Atkinson (2018-19, Fairview 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