

**PROCTOR ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 6, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Exodus Ayers** of **Proctor Academy** is the **2022-23 Gatorade New Hampshire Football Player of the Year**. Ayers is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Proctor Academy.

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 Ayers as New Hampshire'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, Ayers 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-3, 175-pound junior wide receiver and defensive back intercepted 12 passes on defense, returning six for touchdowns, leading the Hornets (8-1) to a NEPSAC bowl championship. Ayers was a factor in all three phases, adding six touchdowns as a returner and averaging 20.8 yards per catch. He recorded three TD receptions as a receiver.

A talented basketball recruit as well, Ayers was recognized as an honor roll student in his first semester at Proctor Academy after transferring from New Mexico and volunteers locally as a community center recreational leader. "He single-handedly beat us," said St. Paul's School coach Craig Vandersea. "He's an effortless, smooth athlete. Defense is where he really showed up. He shuts down an entire side of the field. He's a kid you don't want to throw the ball toward, he shows up in the passing game and he's dynamic as a returner as well."

Ayers has maintained a 3.17 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year 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.

Ayers joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Football Players of the Year Jackson Paradis (2021-22, Tilton School), Curtis Harris-Lopez (2020-21, Nashua North High School), Malcolm Bussey (2019-20, St. Paul's School), and Ryan Toscano (2018-19, Bedford 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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