

**SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 **Arion Carter** of **Smyrna High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year**. Carter is the first Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Smyrna 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 Carter as Tennessee'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, Carter 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-1, 210-pound senior linebacker and running back led the Bulldogs to a 10-2 record and the second round of the 6A playoffs. Carter, who was named 6A Mr. Football, rushed for 1,184 yards and 19 touchdowns on 185 carries (6.4 yards per carry) and also registered a team-high 92 tackles with three sacks, three forced fumbles and an interception. He rumbled for 154 yards on the ground and made eight tackles in Smyrna's second-round playoff loss.

Carter has volunteered locally serving meals at a homeless shelter. He also has donated his time reading to elementary school students and coaching at youth football camps. "Arion Carter is the true definition of a coach on the field. During offensive snaps, you can hear him barking out signals and putting his teammates in the correct positions," said McGavock High School head coach Frederick Burnette. "I love his attitude. He plays the game the right way and he's humble."

Carter has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he remained undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Carter joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Football Players of the Year Ty Simpson (2021-22, Westview High School), Prince Kollie (2020-21, David Crockett High School), Elijah Young (2019-20, South-Doyle High School), and Eric Gray (2018-19, Lausanne Collegiate 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.

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