

**BISHOP VEROT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 3, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Carter Smith** of **Bishop Verot Catholic High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year**. Smith is the first Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Verot Catholic High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Smith as Florida’s best high school football player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.), Peyton Manning (1993-94, Isidore Newman School, La.) and Jackson Arnold (2022-23, John H. Guyer High School, Texas).

The 6-foot-3, 185-pound junior quarterback passed for 2,223 yards and 29 touchdowns this past season, leading the Vikings (11-2) to the Class 2S state quarterfinals. Smith also rushed for 715 yards and 19 scores while punting for a 41.0 yard average. Ranked as the nation’s No. 19 recruit in the Class of 2025 by On3.com, he was a First Team All-State selection as a sophomore.

Smith has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives with Valerie’s House, a non-profit organization that benefits children who have lost close family members. He has also donated his time to community cleanup projects after Hurricane Ian. “Carter Smith is the queen bee that makes all things go for Bishop Verot,” said Darren Nelson, head coach of Estero High School. “He can do it all and is a threat every play. He can run it, throw it short, deep, has a very quick release, is accurate and is very athletic.”

Smith has maintained a weighted 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play football on scholarship at the University of Michigan beginning in the fall of 2025.

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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Florida Football Players of the Year Brandon Inniss (2022-23, American Heritage School), Kenyatta Jackson (2021-22, Chaminade-Madonna Prep), James Williams (2020-21, American Heritage High School), and Derek Wingo (2019-20, St. Thomas Aquinas High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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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