

**CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF LOUISVILLE STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Cole Hodge** of **Christian Academy of Louisville** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year**. Hodge is the first Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Christian Academy of Louisville.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Hodge as Kentucky'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-2, 195-pound senior quarterback passed for 4,104 yards and 57 touchdowns this past season, completing nearly 75 percent of his throws and averaging 10.8 yards per attempt to lead the Centurions (14-1) to the Class 3A state championship. Hodge also rushed for 625 yards and 10 touchdowns. He accounted for five total touchdowns and 238 passing yards in Christian-Academy Louisville's 41-16 win against Bell County in the title game. He finished his prep career with 135 career touchdowns, the second-highest mark in state history.

Hodge volunteers locally with the Special Olympics, the YMCA and as a youth football and basketball instructor. "He's the best high school football quarterback I've seen, and I've been in the state a long time in addition to playing the position at the Division I level and in the NFL," said Hunter Cantwell, the Christian-Academy Louisville head coach. "He's a really humble kid who puts a lot of emphasis on academics and has done a great job using his platform here."

Hodge has maintained a 3.9 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at East Carolina 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.

Hodge joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Football Players of the Year Travis Egan (2022-23, Bullitt East High School), Xavier Brown (2021-22, Lexington Christian Academy), Jager Burton (2020-21, Frederick Douglass High School), and Michael Mayer (2019-20, Covington Catholic 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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