

**HANNIBAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSOURI FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 3, 2023) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Aneyas Williams** of **Hannibal High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year**. Williams is the first Gatorade Missouri Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Hannibal 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 Williams as Missouri'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 5-foot-11, 200-pound senior running back and defensive back rushed for 1,415 yards and 26 touchdowns this past season, leading the Pirates (11-2) to the Class 4 state postseason quarterfinals. A First Team All-State wide receiver as a sophomore and a First Team All-State running back as a junior, Williams also caught 44 passes for 815 yards and 17 scores and returned two punts for touchdowns. Defensively, he recorded 21 tackles and two interceptions, returning one for a score.

Williams has volunteered locally on area beautification projects and as a youth football coach and referee. "Aneyas is as dynamic a player as I've faced in person," said Cody McDowell, head coach of Moberly High. "He's a player who can run and catch at an elite level. And, he was way more of a threat defensively this year than he's been in the past. I call kids like him a unicorn—we don't see them that often."

Williams has maintained a weighted 3.76 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Missouri Football Players of the Year Jeremiyah Love (2022-23, Christian Brothers College High School), Kevin Coleman (2021-22, St. Mary's High School), Mekhi Wingo (2020-21, De Smet Jesuit High School), and Isaiah Davis (2019-20, Joplin 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](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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