

**CARDINAL HAYES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 3, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Rich Belin** of **Cardinal Hayes High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year**. Belin is the first Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Cardinal Hayes 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 Belin as New York’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, 187-pound junior quarterback led the Cardinals to a 12-2 record and the Catholic State Championship this past season. Belin passed for 3,059 yards and 30 touchdowns and added 1,326 yards and 19 scores on the ground. He threw two touchdown passes and rushed for another in Hayes’ 40-22 win over St. Francis High School in the state final. He was named the 2023 New York Catholic High School Football League Offensive Player of the Year.

A practiced musician and artist, Belin has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through the Women’s Missionary Society. “Rich is a very, very good high school quarterback,” said Joe Spagnolo, head coach of Iona Preparatory Upper School. “His improv skills are off the charts and he’s a very tough competitor. Rich carried his team.”

Belin has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Belin joins recent Gatorade New York Football Players of the Year Dante Torres (2022-23, St. Anthony's High School), Charlie McKee (2021-22, Oceanside High School), Clevmer Lubin (2020-21, Suffern High School), and Israel Abanikanda (2019-20, Abraham Lincoln 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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