

**AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (December 6, 2024) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Dia Bell** of **American Heritage School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year**. Bell is the fourth Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year to be chosen from American Heritage School.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Bell as Florida’s best high school football player, and he joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fl.), Peyton Manning (1993-94, Isidore Newman School, La.) and DJ Lagway (2023-24, Willis High School, Texas).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-2, 200-pound junior quarterback had led the Patriots to a 10-2 record and a berth in the Class 4A state semifinals. Bell had passed for 2,597 yards and 29 touchdowns this past season before injuring his right leg in American Heritage’s 24-14 win over Dillard High School in the second round of the state tournament. He also rushed for 561 yards and five scores, averaging 8.4 yards per carry. The son of long-time NBA player Raja Bell, he is ranked as the nation’s No. 8 recruit in the Class of 2026 by ESPN.com.

Bell has volunteered locally as a youth football coach. “The first thing that popped on film and in the game was how poised Dia was in the pocket,” said Jube Joseph, head coach of Miami Central High School. “Dia is the catalyst of that offense. He’s what makes it go. I watched him in some big moments in other games and saw his impact shine.”

Bell has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football at the University of Texas beginning in the fall of 2026.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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.

Bell joins recent Gatorade Florida Football Players of the Year Carter Smith (2023-24, Bishop Verot Catholic High School), Brandon Inniss (2022-23, American Heritage School), Kenyatta Jackson (2021-22, Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory School) and James Williams (2020-21, American Heritage 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, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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 Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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