

**NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 6, 2024) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Aidan Williams** of **Needham High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Massachusetts Football Player of the Year**. Williams is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Needham High 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 Williams as Massachusetts' 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, 220-pound senior running back and linebacker had led the Rockets (12-0) to the best record in program history and a berth in the Division I state championship. Williams rushed for 1,640 yards and 23 touchdowns through 12 games. On defense, the 2023 Boston Herald All-Scholastic selection recorded 64 tackles along with three interceptions and one fumble recovery.

A National Honor Society member, Williams has volunteered locally by fundraising to support cancer research. He has also served on Needham High School’s student-athlete leadership team and as a youth basketball and football coach. “He’s a great player,” said Steve Dembowski, head coach at Milton High School. “He can rush the passer and drop in coverage. Offensively, he’s a big back. He’s strong and runs with both power and speed. He can catch the ball and plays some wildcat in their scheme. He’s a man-child.”

Williams has maintained a 3.8 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football on scholarship at Lehigh University next fall.

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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Football Players of the Year Henry Hasselbeck (2023-24, Xaverian Brothers High School), William Watson (2022-23, Springfield Central High School), Ayden Pereira (2021-22, Central Catholic High School) and Owen McGowan (2020-21, Catholic Memorial 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, 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 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.