

**ST. ANTHONY'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Gary Merrill** of **St. Anthony's High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year**. Merrill is the second Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Anthony's 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 Merrill as New York'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).

The 6-foot-1, 185-pound senior quarterback rushed for 1,955 yards and 32 touchdowns this past season, leading the Friars (9-4) to the New York Catholic High School Football League Class AAA Tournament championship game. Merrill also passed for 1,762 yards and 19 TDs, completing 124-of-180 passes. A 2023 First Team All-State selection, he is also one of the nation's top prep lacrosse players as a midfielder.

Merrill has volunteered locally at Eileen's Home for the Holidays Christmas Dinner, and he has donated his time as a youth football and lacrosse camp counselor. "Gary Merrill is flat-out excellent," said Rocco Del Priore, head coach of Monsignor Farrell High School. "To say he's special is an understatement. He has dominated our entire league. He has such great, quick, subtle moves and makes kids miss. He's St. Anthony's catalyst."

Merrill has maintained a weighted A-minus average in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play lacrosse at the University of North Carolina 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.

Merrill joins recent Gatorade New York Football Players of the Year Rich Belin (2023-24, Cardinal Hayes High School), Dante Torres (2022-23, St. Anthony's High School), Charlie McKee (2021-22, Oceanside High School) and Clevmer Lubin (2020-21, Suffern 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.

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