

HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 **Messiah Mickens** of **Harrisburg High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Player of the Year**. Mickens is the second Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrisburg 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 Mickens as Pennsylvania’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 5-foot-11, 205-pound junior defensive end and running back recorded 81 tackles and 16.5 sacks this past season, leading the Cougars (11-3) to the Class 6A state semifinals. Mickens compiled 39 tackles for loss and logged 21 quarterback hurries, also forcing two fumbles. Offensively, the transfer from Trinity High School ran for 1,214 yards and 21 touchdowns and caught 17 passes for 235 yards and two scores.

Mickens has volunteered locally at his grandmother’s church, giving out turkeys at Thanksgiving and toys at Christmas. He has also donated his time as a youth football coach and mentor. “Messiah has dominated the conference on both sides of the ball,” said Lance Deane, head coach of Central Dauphin East High School. “What makes his play so significant is how he has impacted the game in many different ways.”

Mickens has maintained a 3.34 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football at Penn State University 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.

Mickens joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Football Players of the Year Rico Scott (2023-24, Bishop McDevitt High School), Stone Saunders (2022-23, Bishop McDevitt High School), Nick Singleton (2021-22, Governor Mifflin High School) and Kyle McCord (2020-21, St. Joseph's Preparatory 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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