

**DUNCANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Keelon Russell** of **Duncanville High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year**. Russell is the first Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Duncanville 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 Russell as Texas' best high school football player and he's also been selected as a finalist for the distinguished Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December. With his selection, **Russell** 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-4, 180-pound senior quarterback had led the Panthers (12-0) to the 6A Division I state quarterfinals this past season, passing for 3,652 yards and 52 touchdowns with just two interceptions. The No. 3 prospect in the Class of 2025 according to 247Sports, Rivals and On3, Russell had completed 71.5 percent of his passes, averaging 12.7 yards per attempt. He also rushed for 254 yards and two touchdowns through 12 games.

A member of Duncanville's National Honor Society, Russell has volunteered locally with the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization, distributing turkeys to the Duncanville community as part of a joint effort with the Dallas Cowboys. "Russell is dangerous with the ball in his hand, he can hurt you in so many ways," said DeSoto High School head coach Claude Mathis. "I thought he kept plays alive a lot better this year and was always looking downfield on the scramble drill to make something happen. He's effective because he can throw and run—that's a dangerous combination."

Russell has maintained a 3.4 GPA in the classroom. At the time of his selection, he had made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play football at the University of Alabama 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.

Russell joins recent Gatorade Texas Football Players of the Year DJ Lagway (2023-24, Willis High School), Jackson Arnold (2022-23, Guyer High School), Cade Klubnik (2021-22, Westlake High School) and Sawyer Robertson (2020-21, Coronado 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](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).

###