

**CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Orion Yates** of **Champlain Valley Union High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Vermont Football Player of the Year**. Yates is the second Gatorade Vermont Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union 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 Yates as Vermont'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-3, 210-pound sophomore quarterback and linebacker passed for 2,056 yards and 29 touchdowns this past season, leading the Redhawks (11-0) to a Division I state championship. Yates also rushed for 280 yards and three scores. The 2024 MaxPreps Vermont Player of the Year, he recorded 51 tackles on defense, including 15 for loss, along with six sacks, three forced fumbles and one interception. He accounted for four total touchdowns and passed for 177 yards in Champlain Valley Union's 41-14 win over Rutland in the state final.

An avid skier and guitar player, Yates has volunteered locally on behalf of a clothing drive for those in need as well as for an organization dedicated to teen suicide prevention. "Yates is great in all facets of the game," said Tom McCoy, head coach at Burr and Burton Academy. "He has a strong arm, he's well-composed and he's a great kid who's a leader. He can beat you throwing or with his feet. What sets him apart is that he's equally as impressive on the defensive side of the ball."

Yates has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior year 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.

Yates joins recent Gatorade Vermont Football Players of the Year Jack McCoy (2023-24, Burr and Burton Academy), Jackson Sumner (2022-23, Champlain Valley Union High School), Slade Postemski (2021-22, Rutland High School) and Gavin Johnson (2020-21, Mount Anthony Union 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.