

STAR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WYOMING 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 **Cooper Lawson** of **Star Valley High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Wyoming Football Player of the Year**. Lawson is the first Gatorade Wyoming Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Star Valley 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 Lawson as Wyoming'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-6, 265-pound senior two-way lineman recorded 52 tackles this past season and anchored the front five for an offense that averaged 433 yards per game, leading the Braves (12-0) to the Class AAA state title. Lawson surrendered only one sack and, on defense, he logged eight tackles for a loss, two sacks and 17 quarterback hurries. Ranked as the state's No. 3 recruit in by 247Sports, he will graduate as a three-time state champion and two-time First Team Super State selection.

Formerly the Student Body Secretary at his school, Lawson has volunteered locally on behalf of the community formation and faith-based EBC Youth Group. He has also donated his time to his parish's children's church, the Wyoming Hunger Initiative and the Afton Food Bank. An active 4-H participant with skills in raising pigs, sewing, cake decorating, leathercraft, public speaking, leadership, produce judging and meat identification, he achieved the title of Grand Champion in Foods at the Lincoln County Fair. "Cooper Lawson has been the most dominant lineman in the 3A classification for the past two years," said Mark Lenhardt, Riverton High School head coach. "Whenever Star Valley needed tough yards, they were most likely going to run behind him because he was so dominant in the run game. There isn't one guy who has matched his physicality the past two seasons. For a kid his size, he moves very well and was somebody you had to account for on the defensive side of the ball. In Star Valley's 3-4 scheme, it was very difficult to generate movement to his side, which allowed their linebackers to stay clean and make plays. He will be a very good player at the next level in my opinion because he has all the tools to continue to develop and be great."

Lawson has maintained a 3.65 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 Wyoming 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.

Lawson joins recent Gatorade Wyoming Football Players of the Year Dane Steel (2023-24, Sheridan High School), Colson Coon (2022-23 & 2021-22, Sheridan High School) and Graedyn Buell (2020-21, Cheyenne East 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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