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HEBRON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 6, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Michael Tahiru of Hebron Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Tahiru is the first Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hebron Academy.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Tahiru as Maine's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Tahiru joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-8, 155-pound senior midfielder scored 42 goals and passed for 20 assists this past season, leading the Lumberjacks (15-0-3) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class C championship this past season. The New England Soccer Journal Prep School Player of the Year, Tahiru is a two-time NEPSAC All-Star and a veteran of Ghana's Youth National Team.

A devoted member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Tahiru has served as a Sunday school teacher and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer clinics. "Michael Tahiru definitely makes an impact on the game," said John Siegenthaler, head coach at Millbrook School. "He's very creative on offense and he's willing to backtrack into the midfield too. He's a dynamic player."

Tahiru has maintained a 3.40 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Lehigh University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Tahiru joins recent Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Players of the Year Carson Atherley (2016-17, Bangor High School), Abdi Shariff-Hassan (2015-16, Lewiston High School), Stephen Ochan (2014-15, Deering High School), Wyatt Omsberg (2013-14, Scarborough High School), Matt Saunders (2012-13, Lawrence High School), Robby Lentine (2011-12, Windham High School), Fazal Nabi (2010-11, Portland High School), Gabe Hoffman-Johnson (2009-10 & 2008-09, Falmouth High School), Oliver Blum (2007-08, Greely High School), and Jordan Hale (2006-07, Falmouth High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tahiru will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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