

**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)**

**DEMATHA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Justin Gielen of DeMatha Catholic High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Gielen is the third Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from DeMatha Catholic High School.

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 Gielen as Maryland'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, Gielen 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 6-foot, 180-pound senior forward scored 23 goals and passed for two assists this past season, leading the Stags (10-8-3) to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Tournament championship game. The 2017 Washington Post All-Met Player of the Year, Gielen was the leading scorer for his club team, Baltimore Celtic, en route to the squad's 2017 Under-17 U.S. Youth Soccer national championship. He concluded his prep soccer career with 52 goals and 22 assists.

A cousin of U.S. Women's Soccer National Team midfielder Allie Long, Gielen has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics in addition to donating his time as a youth soccer and basketball coach. "Justin is an extremely athletic and talented kid," said Chris Jennings, head coach of Bishop O'Connell High. "His athleticism and ability in the air is unparalleled. He can out-jump anyone on set pieces and corners. That's where he usually gets his goals."

Gielen has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. He has made signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland beginning 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.

Gielen joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Players of the Year Nick Richardson (2016-17, Archbishop Curley High School), Michael DeShields (2015-16, McDonogh School), Connor Smith (2014-15, McDonogh School), George Campbell (2013-14 & 2012-13, McDonogh School), Andrew Harris (2011-12, Gilman School), Cody Albrecht (2010-11, DeMatha Catholic High School), Marquez Fernandez (2009-10 & 2008-09, McDonogh School), Chris Agorsor (2007-08, McDonogh School), and B.J. Quigley (2006-07, Archbishop Curley High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gielen 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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