

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**DETROIT CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Ryan Pierson of Detroit Catholic Central High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Pierson is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Detroit Catholic Central 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 Pierson as Michigan'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, Pierson 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, 165-pound senior forward led the Shamrocks to a 20-2-3 record and the Division 1 state championship this past season. Pierson scored 32 goals and passed for 15 assists. He tallied 10 goals and six assists in seven postseason games, and notched the game-winning goal in each tournament contest, including a 1-0 win over Walled Lake Central High in the state final.

A member of his school's drama club and Ultimate Frisbee club, Pierson has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit numerous non-profit programs, and he has donated his time as a youth soccer coach. "Ryan is a tremendous player," said Henry Klimes, head coach of Northville High. "He has great speed and technical skill. He plays with lots of smarts and uses his teammates very well."

Pierson has maintained a 3.16 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Saginaw Valley State 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.

Pierson joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Players of the Year Dalton Michael (2016-17, Traverse City West Senior High School), Anthony Bowie (2015-16, Forest Hills Central High School), DeJuan Jones (2014-15, East Lansing High School), Alec Lasinski (2013-14, Skyline High School), Dewey Lewis (2012-13, Rockford High School), Zach Carroll (2011-12, Grand Blanc High School), Dzenan Catic (2010-11, East Kentwood High School), Soony Saad (2009-10, Dearborn High School), Kevin Cope (2008-09, Salem High School), Casey Townsend (2007-08 & 2006-07, Traverse City West High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Pierson 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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