

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Kyle Ruark of Rockhurst High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Missouri Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Ruark is the third Gatorade Missouri Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Rockhurst 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 Ruark as Missouri'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, Ruark 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-9, 140-pound senior midfielder led the Hawklets to a 27-3 record and the Class 4 state championship this past season. Ruark scored 26 goals and passed for 13 assists, tallying a goal and an assist in Rockhurst's 3-2 win over Vianney High in the state final. The Missouri Soccer Coaches Association Class 4 Player of the Year, Ruark was an All-American selection by United Soccer Coaches. He concluded his prep soccer career with 34 goals and 37 assists.

Ruark organized a soccer equipment drive to help disadvantaged youth in Belize. A member of his school's Latin Club and Philosophy Club, he has volunteered locally as a youth tutor and as a soccer coach. "Kyle was the heart of the Rockhurst midfield," said Dave Wiebenga, head coach of Lee's Summit High. "He ran the entire system, and his play dictated the team. His high standard of play influenced the players around him to be more successful."

A National Merit Scholar, Ruark has maintained a weighted 4.03 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Chicago, where he will play soccer, 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.

Ruark joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Soccer Players of the Year Billy Hency (2016-17, Rockwood Summit High School), AJ Palazzolo (2015-16, Christian Brothers College High School), Dalton Souder (2014-15, Lee's Summit High School), Keith Grieshaber (2013-14, Marquette High School), Tommy Barlow (2012-13, Chaminade College Preparatory School), Derek Schrick (2011-12, Rockhurst High School), Alec Cochran (2010-11, Christian Brothers College High School), Adnan Gabeljic (2009-10, Mehlville High School), Alex Sweetin (2008-09, Rockhurst), Will Bruin (2007-08, De Smet Jesuit), and Mike Roach (2006-07, Chaminade College Preparatory School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ruark 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.

###