

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

**ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Michael Rojas of Royal High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Rojas is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Royal 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 Rojas as Washington'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, Rojas 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, 165-pound senior midfielder scored 19 goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Knights (19-3-1) to the Class 1A state semifinals. Rojas also back-checked as part of a defense that recorded 17 shutouts in 23 games. The South Central Athletic Conference Most Valuable Player, Rojas is a two-time Class 1A First Team All-State selection. He concluded his prep soccer career with 50 goals and 22 assists.

Rojas has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects, and he has donated his time to multiple community service projects through the National Honor Society. "Michael is the only player this year that we actually planned for," said Greg Wagner, head coach of Highland High. "We knew that in order to slow down and have a chance against Royal, we had to control his impact on the game. He is the most dominant left-footed player I have ever coached against."

Rojas has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Rojas joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Players of the Year Matt Williams (2016-17, Archbishop Murphy High School), Bennett Lechner (2015-16, Camas High School), Wallis Lapsley (2014-15, Lakeside School), Carter Johnson (2013-14 & 2012-13, Skyview High School), Jordan Morris (2011-12, Mercer Island High School), Aaron Kovar (2010-11, Garfield High School), Nick Palodichuk (2009-10, Camas), Michael Harris (2008-09, Shorecrest High School), Brent Richards (2007-08, Camas High School), and Brandon Kelley (2006-07, Snohomish High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rojas 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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