

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

JSERRA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 18, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Isabella D'Aquila of JSerra Catholic High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. D'Aquila is the first Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from JSerra 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 D'Aquila as California's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, D'Aquila 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 (2004-05, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-7 junior forward led the Lions to a 22-2-3 record and the Southern Section Division 1 championship this past season. D'Aquila scored 39 goals and passed for 15 assists and had the lone goal in a 1-0 win over Santa Margarita High in the title game. The two-time Southern Section Division 1 Player of the Year, D'Aquila has participated in multiple training camps with the U.S. Soccer Under-17 Women's National Team. She concluded her junior year with 101 goals and 44 assists in her prep soccer career.

D'Aquila has volunteered locally as an elementary school teacher's aide and as a youth soccer coach. "Isabella is dynamite," said Matty West, head coach of Mater Dei High. "She brings intensity, athleticism, hunger and relentless effort. She was the pivotal piece for JSerra."

D'Aquila has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Santa Clara University beginning in the fall of 2019.

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.

D'Aquila joins recent Gatorade California Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kennedy Wesley (2016-17, Valley Christian High School), Taylor Ziemer (2015-16 & 2014-15, Montgomery High School), MacKenzie Cerda (2013-14, Edison High School), Amber Munerlyn (2012-13, Santiago High School), Ryan Walker-Hartshorn (2011-12, Bishop O'Dowd High School), Lauren Bohaboy (2010-11, Santa Margarita Catholic High School), Abby Dahlkemper (2009-10, Sacred Heart Prep.), Lauren Matheson (2008-09, Mission Viejo), Teresa Noyola (2007-08, Palo Alto), and Lauren Barnes (2006-07, Upland) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, D'Aquila 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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