

## **SAN CLEMENTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CALIFORNIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 6, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Blake Bowen of San Clemente High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Bowen is the second Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from San Clemente 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 Bowen as California'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, Bowen joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West High School, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire High School, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.).

The 5-foot-9, 145-pound senior midfielder led the Tritons to a 25-2-4 record and championships in both the Southern Section Division 1 sectional tournament as well as the Southern California Division I Regional tournament this past season. Bowen recorded 18 goals and 15 assists, setting up both regulation-time goals in San Clemente's 3-2 shootout victory over Cathedral High in the SoCal Regional title game. The Southern Section Division 1 Player of the Year, he concluded his prep soccer career with 42 goals and 27 assists.

Bowen has volunteered locally with the Boys & Girls Club of the South Coast Area and as a youth soccer coach. "Whenever Blake got the ball, my heart stopped," said Todd Heil, head coach of Santa Barbara High. "The pace at which he played was hard to match, and his ability to get behind a defense with the ball at his feet was impressive."

Bowen has maintained a weighted 3.43 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at San Diego 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Bowen joins recent Gatorade California Boys Soccer Players of the Year Tristan Weber (2017-18, San Clemente High School), Rodney Michael (2016-17, Dunn School), Elliot Smith-Hastie (2015-16, Loyola High School), Corban Anderson (2014-15, Granite Bay High School) and Abu Danladi (2013-14, Dunn School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Bowen also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).