

WEST ALLEGHENY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 6, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Nathan Dragisich of West Allegheny High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Dragisich is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from West Allegheny 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 Dragisich as Pennsylvania'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, Dragisich 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 and forward led the Indians to a 23-2 record and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Dragisich recorded 44 goals and 20 assists, including a hat trick in a 4-0 win over Strath Haven High in the state title game. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Player of the Year, Dragisich was also a United Soccer Coaches All-American selection. He concluded his prep soccer career with 86 goals and 52 assists.

Dragisich has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and referee. "Nathan Dragisich is a great asset to any team he lines up with," said Rob Eldridge, head coach of South Fayette High. "Besides having all the quality intangibles of a great soccer player, he possesses a high in-game IQ. With Nathan, it's what you don't see that sets him apart from others.

Dragisich has maintained a weighted 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in soccer on scholarship at Duquesne 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.

Dragisich joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Soccer Players of the Year Chris Donovan (2017-18, Conestoga High School), David Egbo (2016-17, The Kiski School), Evan Vare (2015-16, Central Bucks East High School), Robbie Mertz (2014-15, Upper St. Clair High School) and Colten Habecker (2013-14, The Hill School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Dragisich 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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