

FRANK W. COX HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Clay Obara of Frank W. Cox High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Obara is the second Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Frank W. Cox 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 Obara as Virginia'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, Obara 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-10, 165-pound senior midfielder and forward scored 35 goals and passed for 18 assists this past season, leading the Falcons (15-3-2) to the Class 6, Region A tournament semifinals. Obara recorded 10 multi-goal games, including six hat tricks, and recorded at least one point in all 19 games he played. Also the 2018 Class 6 Region A Player of the Year, he concluded his prep soccer career with 86 goals and 41 assists.

Obara has volunteered locally at Camp Gonnawannagoagain, a summer program for children with autism. He has also donated his time with the US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program and the SPCA. "Clay only needs an inch of space to score a goal," said Zach Kalder, head coach of Grassfield High. "Most high school players need time and space in order to control the ball, settle their nerves, see the goal and fire a shot. Clay needs one inch and one second—goal. He makes the opposing defenses pay if they lose focus for even a second."

Obara has maintained a weighted 4.04 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at James Madison 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.

Obara joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Bryan Silver (2017-18, Oakton High School), Jacob Labovitz (2016-17, Langley High School), Lucas Mendes (2015-16, Washington-Lee High School), Marcel Berry (2014-15, Albemarle High School) and Peter Pearson (2013-14, Cape Henry Collegiate School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Obara 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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