

## **THE POTOMAC SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 12, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Aiden Zarate of The Potomac School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Zarate as Virginia’s best high school boys soccer player, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Alecko Eskandarian (1999-00, Bergen Catholic High School, New Jersey), Cristian Roldan (2012-13, El Rancho High School, California) and Dan Klink (2024-25, Loyola Blakefield, Maryland).

The 5-foot-9, 165-pound senior midfielder scored 10 goals and passed for nine assists this past season, leading the Panthers (15-4-3) to the Virginia Independent School Athletic Association Division I state championship game. A VISAA Division I All-State selection, Zarate was a Washington Post First Team All-Met honoree in his only season of high school soccer; previously, he played exclusively for his club team. Ranked as the Mid-Atlantic Region’s No. 11 prospect by TopDrawer Soccer, he also received United Soccer Coaches All-Mid Atlantic recognition.

The leader of The Potomac School Competitive Programming Club as well as a member of his school’s STEM Club, Zarate has volunteered locally as a teaching assistant at Alexandria Country Day School. He has also donated his time on behalf of Martha’s Table as well as Bikes for the World. “Aiden was the most individually impactful player we faced last fall,” said Rick Wilcox, head coach of the Episcopal High School. “He was seemingly everywhere and constantly put us under pressure. Fast, technical and unafraid, he made things happen.”

Zarate has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer at Santa Clara University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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