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HELLGATE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE MONTANA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 11, 2016) — In its 31th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced **Peter Byrne of Hellgate High School** as its **2015-16 Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Byrne is the second Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hellgate 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 Byrne as Montana'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 May, Byrne joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-11, 160-pound senior goalkeeper led the Knights to a 14-1 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Byrne allowed just two goals and notched 13 shutouts, including three clean sheets in the team's trio of postseason matches. The Class AA State Player of the Year, he played in the state final with a cast to protect his broken right hand and saved a penalty shot in the final minutes of Hellgate's 1-0 win over Helena High.

Byrne has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. A talented saxophonist who has played in competitions across the country, he has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit a children's shelter and he has also donated his time as a youth soccer coach and referee.

"Peter Byrne is one of the best goalkeepers that I have seen in Montana," said Ryan Billiet, head coach of Glacier High. "He was very technically sound and provided such great vocal leadership which helped organize his well-balanced defensive unit."

Byrne has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Carroll College beginning 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Byrne joins recent Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Players of the Year Ben Hietala (2014-15, Bozeman High School), Alec Marshall (2013-14, Bozeman High School), Nick Downs (2012-13 & 2011-12, CM Russell High School), Anthony Keene (2010-11, Billings West High School), Zach Moyers, (2009-10, Billings West High School), Jack Pueringer (2008-09, Billings West High School), Garion Holian (2007-08, Hellgate High School), and Adam Clinch (2006-07, Capital High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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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