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## **EDMOND SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OKLAHOMA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 12, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Dante Brigida of Edmond Santa Fe High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Brigida is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Edmond Santa Fe 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 Brigida as Oklahoma'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, Brigida joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-4, 150-pound senior forward scored 25 goals and passed for 7 assists this past season, leading the Wolves (10-5) to the Class 6A quarterfinals. The Central Oklahoma Athletic Conference Player of the Year, Brigida is an All-State and All-District honoree and was named the Jim Thorpe Male Player of the Year in soccer.

Brigida has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Dante Brigida was the best player I've seen over the past few seasons," said Stephen Cookson, head coach at U.S. Grant High School. "He possesses all the tools, and he not only excels on the field, but he also respects the game."

Brigida has maintained a 3.26 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Oral Roberts 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Brigida joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Players of the Year Garrett McLaughlin (2015-16 & 2014-15, Heritage Hall High School), Mauro Cichero (2013-14 & 2012-13, Norman North High School), Cristian Mata (2011-12, Union High School), Will Smith (2010-11, Norman North High School), Omar Mata (2009-10, Union High School), Jack Coleman (2008-09, Norman North High School), Thomas Shannon (2007-08, Broken Arrow Senior High School), and Jonathan Gann (2006-07, Union High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Dante will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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