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MOSES BROWN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 12, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Poom Mera of Moses Brown School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Mera is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Moses Brown 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 Mera as Rhode Island'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, Mera 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-8, 135-pound senior midfielder led the Quakers to a 17-0-2 record and the Division II state championship this past season. Mera scored 12 goals and passed for five assists, including one of each in a 5-0 win over Mount Hope High School in the state final. The state's Division II Player of the Year, Mera was also an All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and a two-time Division II First Team All-State honoree.

Mera has volunteered at Saint Anne's Hospital in Fall River, Mass., and as a summer camp counselor in Maine. "Poom was a nice player to watch and definitely had a huge impact for Moses Brown," said Tim Ryan, head coach of the Prout School. "He is a very well-balanced player. He has decent size, good quickness and is very strong on the ball. He makes things happen."

Mera has maintained a weighted 3.30 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to attend Union College in New York, where he will play soccer, 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 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.

Mera joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Players of the Year Stavros Zarokostas (2015-16, La Salle Academy), Leandro Alves (2014-15, Shea High School), Komla Dogbey (2013-14, Hope High School), Dan Apajee (2012-13, La Salle Academy), Colin Patch (2011-12, La Salle Academy), Marcos Ugarte (2010-11, Providence Country Day School), Nick Dubee (2009-10 & 2008-09, Chariho High School), and Brett Uttley (2007-08 & 2006-07, North Kingstown High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Poom 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.

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