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## **ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Charles Touche of Albuquerque Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Touche is the fourth Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Albuquerque Academy.

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 Touche as New Mexico'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, Touche 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 6-foot-3, 185-pound senior forward led the Chargers to a 19-3-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Touche scored 40 goals and passed for 15 assists, including a goal in ABQ Academy's 2-0 win over St. Pius X High School in the state final. The New Mexico High School Soccer Coaches Association's Class 5A Player of the Year, he participated in the High School All-American Game in North Carolina in December and concluded his prep soccer career with 71 goals and 37 assists.

The president of the Albuquerque Academy Student Senate, Touche organized thank-you cards for his fellow students to sign for the school's custodians. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and completed a service-mission trip to Costa Rica, where he helped build a playground. "Charles has the intelligence, skill and sheer size and power to take his game to the next level and compete with anyone," said Jason Cloyes, head coach of the Bosque School. "He is a fantastic player."

Touche has twice received a perfect score on the National Latin Exam and has maintained a weighted 4.38 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has made a verbal commitment to attend Cornell University, 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.

Touche joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Players of the Year Miguel Lucero (2015-16, Atrisco Heritage Academy), Sergio Rivas (2014-15, Cibola High School), Guillermo Diaz (2013-14, Gadsden High School), Luke Lawrence (2012-13, La Cueva High School), Brad Carabajal (2011-12, Eldorado High School), Nathanael Pacheco (2010-11, St. Pius X High School), Darren McAfee (2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Pat Pacheco (2008-09, Taos High School), Victor Rodriguez (2007-08, Las Cruces High School), and Seth C'de Baca (2006-07, Sandia Preparatory School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Charles 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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