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## **LEGACY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE COLORADO 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 Tajon Buchanan of Legacy High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Colorado Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Buchanan is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Legacy 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 Buchanan as Colorado'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, Buchanan 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, 150-pound senior forward scored 21 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Lightning (11-5-1) to the second round of the Class 5A state tournament. The Colorado High School Soccer Coaches Association's State Player of the Year, Buchanan set a school record for goals and points in his only season of high school soccer, having previously played only in the US Soccer Development Academy. He was a Denver Post First Team All-State selection and an All-American honoree as named by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Buchanan has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and referee, and has donated his time at a homeless shelter in his native Canada. "Tajon has a knowledge of soccer you can see in the first touch he takes," said Erik Eckhoff, head coach of Poudre High School. "His body movement gets opponents to bite when he wants and retreat when he wants."

Buchanan has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Syracuse University 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.

Buchanan joins recent Gatorade Colorado Boys Soccer Players of the Year Porter Milner (2015-16, Broomfield High School), Quinn Liebmann (2014-15, Boulder High School), David Meyer (2013-14, Pine Creek High School), Miguel Jaime (2012-13, Cherry Creek High School), Shane O'Neill (2011-12, Fairview High School), Tidiane Dia (2010-11, Mountain Vista High School), Cole Chapleski (2009-10, Broomfield High School), Alex Tarnoczi (2008-09, Rock Canyon High School), Morgan Sacco (2007-08, Greeley Central High School), and Miguel Rosales (2006-07, Smoky Hill High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tajon 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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