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SALESIANUM SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Jason Blackwell of Salesianum School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Blackwell is the ninth Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Salesianum 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 Blackwell as Delaware'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, Blackwell 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, 180-pound senior midfielder led the Sallies to a 16-1-1 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Blackwell scored 15 goals and passed for 14 assists, recording one of each in Salesianum's 2-0 win over Appoquinimink High in the state title game. A four-time state champion, he has twice been named First Team All-State and he was a 2016 All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

A member of the Salesianum Spanish National Honor Society, Blackwell has volunteered locally at Emmanuel Dining Room, serving no-cost meals to people in need. "Jason's ability to control the midfield physically and vocally was second to none," said Kyle Ellis, head coach of Caravel Academy. "Jason is a gifted player technically, but more importantly he is a leader on and off the field."

Blackwell has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Blackwell joins recent Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Players of the Year Matt Dina (2015-16, Appoquinimink High School), Sam Jester (2014-15, Appoquinimink High School), Dylan Huber (2013-14, Salesianum School), Hunter Dann (2012-13, Salesianum School), Matt Hogsten (2011-12, Dover High School), Nick Dirienzo (2010-11, Charter School of Wilmington), Andrew O'Malley (2009-10 & 2008-09, Salesianum School), Matt Margiotta (2007-08, Salesianum School), and Matt Marcin (2006-07, Charter School of Wilmington) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jason 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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