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**NAPERVILLE NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Chris Sullivan of Naperville North High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Sullivan is the second Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Naperville North 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 Sullivan as Illinois' 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, Sullivan 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-10, 150-pound senior midfielder led the Huskies to a 21-2-3 record and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Sullivan scored 19 goals and passed for one of his 13 assists in Naperville North's 3-1 win over Barrington High in the state final. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, he was also a two-time First Team All-State selection and participated in the High School All-American Game in North Carolina in December.

One of four Naperville North students named to the J. Kyle Braid Leadership Club as a sophomore, Sullivan is currently a member of his school's Student Government Board. He has volunteered as a freshman mentor and as a Dawg Pound Leader with North's student fan section. "Sullivan just plays the game differently," said Sean Wesley, head coach of Benet Academy. "To say he has composure is an understatement. The great ones can slow the game down and be difference-makers in the final third. It is obvious to everyone watching Naperville North play that he is a player with that level of talent."

Sullivan has maintained a weighted 3.93 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Bowling Green 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.

Sullivan joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Players of the Year Ty Seager (2015-16 & 2014-15, Wheaton Academy), Mike Catalano (2013-14, Lake Park High School), Brandon Medina (2012-13, St. Ignatius College Prep.), Drew Conner (2011-12, Cary-Grove High School), Vince Ciccirelli (2010-11, Peoria Notre Dame High School), Bryan Ciesiulka (2009-10, Neuqua Valley High School), Tim Zimmer (2008-09, Naperville Central High School), John Shakon (2007-08, Hinsdale Central High School), and Anthony Colaizzi (2006-07, Warren Township High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Chris 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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