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**MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Alyssa Poarch of Middletown High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Delaware Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Poarch is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Middletown 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 Poarch as Delaware's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Poarch 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-7 senior forward and midfielder scored 38 goals and passed for 13 assists this past season, leading the Cavaliers (17-1) to the Division I state championship. A First Team All-State selection, Poarch participated in a training camp with the U.S. Soccer Under-19 Women's National Team in March and was named Player of the Year by the Delaware High School Girls Soccer Coaches Association.

Poarch has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer camps, blood-donation drives and the Best Buddies program. "I've never seen a high school player as impressive as Alyssa Poarch," said Wes Kendle, head coach at Appoquinimink High School. "She has the ability to take over a game single-handed, even when the opposition is man-marking her or even putting several players on her. She's truly a special player."

Poarch has maintained a 3.26 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Poarch joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Soccer Players of the Year Brooke Beam (2015-16, Indian River High School), Karlina Panella (2014-15, Padua Academy), Alexis Prillaman (2013-14 & 2012-13, Caesar Rodney High School), Casey Horney (2011-12, Padua Academy), Caitlin Forte (2010-11, Indian River High School), Jazmine Reeves (2009-10 & 2008-09, Caesar Rodney High School), Morgan Morrow (2007-08, Padua Academy), and Brittny Rhoades (2006-07, Padua Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Alyssa 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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