

**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)**

**YARMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MAINE GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Sara D'Appolonia of Yarmouth High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Player of the Year. D'Appolonia is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Yarmouth 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 D'Appolonia as Maine'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, D'Appolonia 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 junior forward led the Clippers to a 16-1-1 record and the Class B state championship this past season. D'Appolonia scored 16 goals and passed for 18 assists, recording one of each in a 3-1 win over Waterville High in the state title game. The Maine Soccer Coaches Association's Class B Player of the Year, she is a two-time First Team Class B All-State selection and concluded her junior year with 30 goals and 40 assists in her prep soccer career.

D'Appolonia won the Richard B. Costello Award, presented by the Maine Board of Soccer Officials to the player who demonstrates outstanding sportsmanship, leadership and ability. She has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank and as a youth soccer coach and mentor. "If you leave Sara open for just one second, she can bury a shot in the upper 90 or lower corner," said Chris Kohl, head coach of Thornton Academy. "She also has a high soccer IQ and makes all the players around her better."

D'Appolonia has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

D'Appolonia joins recent Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Players of the Year Opal Curless (2015-16, Mount Desert Island High School), Cassie Symonds (2014-15 & 2013-14, Windham High School), Caitlin Bucksbaum (2012-13 & 2011-12, Falmouth High School), Allison Walton (2010-11 & 2009-10, Brunswick High School), Elise Amioka (2008-09, Marshwood High School), Rachele Burns (2007-08, Gorham High School), and Kelsey Wilson (2006-07, Gorham High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sara 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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