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**COLTS NECK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Frankie Tagliaferri of Colts Neck High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Tagliaferri is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Colts Neck 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 Tagliaferri as New Jersey'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, Tagliaferri 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, 5-foot-6 senior forward scored 22 goals and passed for eight assists this past season, leading the Cougars (15-3-1) to the Central, Group 4 tournament semifinals. Tagliaferri recorded multiple points in nine of the 10 games she played after missing Colts Neck's first nine contests while participating in the FIFA Under-17 World Cup in Jordan. She was the 2015 NJ.com Player of the Year and the 2015-16 USA TODAY National Player of the Year.

Tagliaferri has volunteered locally with Hurricane Sandy relief efforts and as a youth soccer coach. "Frankie is a tremendous player," said Kevin Brady, head coach of East Brunswick High School. "She plays the game at a speed that is unique for a player of her age. She is a top player in the country."

Tagliaferri has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Penn State 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.

Two-time winner Tagliaferri joins Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Players of the Year Hana Kerner (2014-15, Northern Highlands Regional High School), Caroline Chagares (2013-14 & 2011-12, Ramapo High School), Clare Shea (2012-13, Northern Highlands Regional High School), Danielle Colaprico (2010-11, Red Bank Catholic High School), Kaitlyn Kerr (2009-10 & 2008-09, The Pennington School), Shannon Mayrose (2007-08, Freehold High School), and Ingrid Wells (2006-07, Montclair High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Frankie 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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