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**GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 Madisyn Pezzino of Grand Island Senior High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Pezzino is the first Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Grand Island Senior 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 Pezzino as New York'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, Pezzino 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-8 senior forward scored a state-record 73 goals and passed for 17 assists this past season, leading the Vikings (19-1-1) to the Class A state quarterfinals. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Pezzino also broke the state's career record for goals, finishing with 251. The Class A co-Player of the Year, she is a four-time All-Western New York honoree.

Pezzino has volunteered locally on behalf of students with developmental difficulties and a youth soccer program. "Madisyn Pezzino is unbelievable, probably the best player I've seen in 11 years of coaching," said Chris Robey, head coach of Kenmore East High School. "Her footwork, skills and touch are amazing, and she has tremendous vision."

Pezzino has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Florida State University 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.

Pezzino joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Players of the Year Hope Breslin (2015-16, Massapequa High School), Keri Cavallo (2014-15, South Side High School), Kayla Cappuzzo (2013-14, Calhoun High School), Alana O'Neill (2012-13, Washingtonville High School), Cari Roccaro (2011-12, East Islip High School), Tatiana Saunders (2010-11, Rye High School), Crystal Dunn (2009-10, South Side High School), Kim DeCesare (2008-09, Massapequa High School), Alaina Beyar (2007-08, South Side High School), and Hannah Cerrone (2006-07, Ketcham High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Madisyn 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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