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**HOUGH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Ashlynn Serepca of Hough High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Serepca is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hough 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 Serepca as North Carolina'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, Serepca 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-5 junior forward scored 25 goals and passed for 35 assists this past season, leading the Huskies (20-2-2) to the Class 4A state quarterfinals. Serepca recorded a point in all but two games and recorded 17 multi-point games. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team, Serepca is a two-time MECKA 4A Conference Player of the Year. She concluded her junior year with 82 goals and 68 assists in her prep soccer career.

Serepca has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group. "This season I feel like Ashlynn received more attention from other teams trying to game-plan against her," said Chase Nifong, head coach of A.L. Brown High School. "She didn't have as many goals as last season but she found ways to be involved by assisting her teammates and making them better."

Serepca has maintained a weighted 4.76 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Virginia beginning in the fall of 2018.

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 Serepca joins Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Brianna Pinto (2014-15, Jordan High School), Morgan Reid (2013-14, Cardinal Gibbons High School), Alexis Shaffer (2012-13 & 2011-12, Green Hope High School), Caroline Lindquist (2010-11, Ravenscroft School), Mollie Pathman (2009-10 & 2008-09, Durham Academy), Nicole Danford (2007-08, Green Hope High School), and Nicole Panek (2006-07, Mount Tabor High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ashlynn 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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