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**WALSH JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 Sofia Rossi of Walsh Jesuit High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Rossi is the fifth Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Walsh Jesuit 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 Rossi as Ohio'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, Rossi 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-9 senior forward led the Warriors to a 22-1 record and their fourth straight Division I state championship this past season. Rossi scored 29 goals and passed for 14 assists, including a goal in Walsh Jesuit's 2-0 win over Springboro High in the title game. She scored the game-winning goal in the state final each of her first three championship runs with the Warriors. The two-time Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association Division I Player of the Year, Rossi was also the 2016 winner of the Ms. Soccer award. She concluded her prep soccer career with 81 goals and 51 assists.

Rossi has volunteered locally in hospital emergency rooms and at an elder-care facility. She has also donated her time at a homeless shelter and has completed a service-mission trip to Costa Rica. "I have been coaching for 17 years and I do not remember a player that had as much impact on a game for a team than Sofia," said Pete Ragone, head coach of North Royalton High School. "She is deadly because she has tremendous knowledge of the game. She is a team player with great vision and can score virtually from any opportunity."

Rossi has maintained a 3.82 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Wake Forest 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.

Rossi joins recent Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Players of the Year Malia Berkely (2015-16 & 2014-15, Badin High School), Abby Elinsky (2013-14, Rocky River High School), Sandra Yu (2012-13, Walsh Jesuit High School), Ashley Meier (2011-12, Strongsville High School), Sandra Yu (2010-11, Walsh Jesuit High School), Elizabeth Burchenal (2009-10 & 2008-09, St. Ursula Academy), Tahnai Annis (2007-08, Pickerington North High School), and Rose Augustin (2006-07, Walsh Jesuit High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sofia 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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