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**JL MANN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 Caroline Conti of JL Mann Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Conti is the third Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from JL Mann Academy.

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 Conti as South 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, Conti 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-6 sophomore forward and midfielder led the Patriots to a 24-1 record and the Class AAAAA state championship this past season. Conti scored 33 goals and passed for 18 assists. She scored in 18 of 25 games and recorded 11 multi-goal games, including three hat tricks. Conti is a two-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her sophomore year with 50 goals and 32 assists in her prep soccer career.

The vice president of the J.L. Mann student council, Conti has volunteered locally with the Salvation Army and as a youth soccer coach. "Caroline is one of the best high school players I have watched in years," said Ansley Pendergrass, head coach of T.L. Hanna High School. "Our game plan was to man-mark her and it didn't faze her. She never got frustrated, she just kept playing hard and found ways to score."

Conti has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Clemson University beginning in the fall of 2019.

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.

Conti joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kasey Parker (2015-16 & 2014-15, Dreher High School), Jeni Erickson (2013-14, J.L. Mann Academy), Chelsea Drennan (2012-13, T.L. Hanna High School), Stephanie DeVita (2011-12 & 2010-11, Hillcrest High School), Stephanie DeVita (2009-10, Hillcrest High School), Sarah Schaidle (2008-09, Mauldin High School), and Kira Campbell (2007-08 & 2006-07, Lexington High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Caroline 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.