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**O'GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Theresa Pujado of O'Gorman High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Pujado is the second Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from O'Gorman 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 Pujado as South Dakota'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, Pujado 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-4 senior midfielder scored 13 goals and passed for three assists this past season, leading the Knights (12-2-1) to the Class AA state championship game. Pujado scored the game-winning, overtime goal in O'Gorman's 3-2 win over TF Riggs High in the state semifinals. A three-time First Team All-State selection and a two-time state champion, she concluded her prep soccer career with 43 goals.

A member of the O'Gorman High student council and a student trainer at the school, Pujado has volunteered locally delivering clothes to families in need and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church. "Theresa controlled O'Gorman's game," said Nathan Tritle, head coach of Brookings High School. "We just could not shut her down anytime we played her."

Pujado has maintained a weighted 4.06 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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 Pujado joins Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jessica Ryan (2014-15, Belle Fourche High School), and KJ Medler (2013-14, St. Thomas More High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Theresa 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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