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**SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Patrick O'Hara of South Burlington High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Player of the Year. O'Hara is the fifth Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from South Burlington 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 O'Hara as Vermont's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, O'Hara 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-10, 170-pound senior forward scored 21 goals and passed for 20 assists this past season, leading the Wolves (16-1-1) to the Division 1 state championship. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Soccer Player of the Year, O'Hara is also a three-time First Team All-State honoree and an All-American selection by United Soccer Coaches.

Also a talented musician, O'Hara has volunteered locally on behalf of blood-donation drives, an elementary school literacy outreach initiative and a basketball program for disabled children. "Patrick O'Hara is a special player," said Stephen Levesque, head coach of St. Johnsbury Academy. "He is the complete package: He has pace, he can beat guys off the dribble, he can finish and he can set his teammates up to score. He's one of the best I've seen at that age."

O'Hara has maintained a 4.06 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Bucknell 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.

Two-time winner O'Hara joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Players of the Year Patrick O'Hara (2016-17, South Burlington High School), Leland Gazo (2015-16, Rice Memorial High School), Aiman Ginawi (2014-15, South Burlington High School), Zack Evans (2013-14, Champlain Valley Union High School), Shane Haley (2012-13, Champlain Valley Union High School), Jack Shea (2011-12, U-32 High School), Paul Bianchi (2010-11, Essex High School), Andrew Mercier (2009-10, South Burlington High School), Rob Cole (2008-09, South Burlington High School), Tyler Macnee (2007-08, Champlain Valley Union), and Andy Borah (2006-07, Champlain Valley Union) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, O'Hara 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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