

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

ST. CHARLES NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 18, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Hailey Rydberg of St. Charles North High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Rydberg is the third Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Charles North 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 Rydberg as Illinois'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, Rydberg 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 (2004-05, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-9 senior midfielder scored 22 goals and passed for 15 assists this past season, leading the North Stars (21-1-1) to the Class 3A state quarterfinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection by the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association, she was a 2017 United Soccer Coaches All-American honoree. She concluded her prep soccer career with 53 goals and 50 assists.

Rydberg has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit pediatric cancer research. She has also donated her time as a youth soccer coach. "Hailey Rydberg is a dynamic player," said Shannon Etnyre, head coach of Libertyville High. "Our back line had a tough time keeping up with Hailey's pace and movement off the ball."

Rydberg has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Iowa 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.

Rydberg joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Players of the Year Emma Thomson (2016-17, Maine South High School), Kelly Maday (2015-16, New Trier High School), Jenna Szczesny (2014-15 & 2013-14, Barrington High School), Zoe Swift (2012-13, Naperville North High School), Courtney Raetzman (2011-12, Conant High School), Megan Oyster (2010-11, Neuqua Valley High School), Vanessa DiBernardo (2009-10, Waubonsie Valley High School), Rachel Quon (2008-09, Lake Forest High School), Bri Rodriguez (2007-08, Waubonsie Valley High School), and Tessa Gavilsky (2006-07, Granite City High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rydberg 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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