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## **URBANA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MARYLAND GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 18, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Abbey Burdette of Urbana High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Burdette is the first Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Urbana 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 Burdette as Maryland'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, Burdette 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-8 senior forward scored 17 goals and passed for 11 assists this past season, leading the Hawks (18-1-1) to the Class 4A state championship game. A two-time Maryland Association of Coaches of Soccer First Team All-State honoree, Burdette was an All-American selection by United Soccer Coaches. She concluded her prep soccer career with 57 goals and a school-record 41 assists.

Burdette has volunteered locally with the Urbana High Mini-thon fundraiser event to benefit childhood cancer research. She has also donated her time as a youth soccer coach. "Playing against Abbey the last three years has been a privilege and a challenge," said Aric Canonico, head coach of Oakdale High. "She has a bigger engine than everyone else. She's a hunter and routinely turned a half-chance into a full shot. When we game-planned for her, it ate up our resources, allowing Abbey's teammates a greater run of play. So you can't win either way."

Burdette has maintained a weighted 4.44 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Burdette joins recent Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Players of the Year Cammie Murtha (2016-17, Walter Johnson High School), Kia Rankin (2015-16, McDonogh School), Bridgette Andrzejewski (2014-15, McDonogh School), Imani Dorsey (2013-14, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School), Midge Purce (2012-13, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School), Ashley Spivey (2011-12, McDonogh School), Alex Doll (2010-11 & 2009-10, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School), Caroline Miller (2008-09, Walter Johnson High School), and Christine Nairn (2007-08 & 2006-07, Archbishop Spalding High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Burdette 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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