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MAPLE GROVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Meredith Haakenson of Maple Grove Senior High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Haakenson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Maple Grove Senior 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 Haakenson as Minnesota'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, Haakenson 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-6 senior midfielder scored 19 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Crimson (20-3) to the Class AA state tournament championship game. The state's Class AA Miss Soccer, Haakenson is a four-time Class AA First Team All-State selection. She is rated as the nation's No. 36 recruit in the Class of 2018 by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She concluded her prep soccer career with 56 goals and 50 assists.

Haakenson founded a non-profit initiative to raise money to battle childhood cancer. She has volunteered locally with Feed My Starving Children and as a peer tutor. "Meredith took control of the game and dominated defensively and offensively," said Ginger Flohaug, head coach of Centennial High. "Her speed with the ball will match most players without the ball. Her vision of the game is top class."

Haakenson has maintained a 3.77 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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 Haakenson joins Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Hannah Cade (2015-16, Lakeville North High School), Sophie Babo (2014-15, Orono High School), Elizabeth Endy (2013-14, Minnetonka High School), Jenna Roering (2012-13 & 2011-12, Centennial High School), Taylor Uhl (2010-11, Eden Prairie High School), Kassey Kallman (2009-10, Woodbury High School), Catie Sessions (2008-09, Woodbury High School), Krista Lundgren (2007-08, Lakeville South High School), and Angie Olson (2006-07, Eagan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Haakenson 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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