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MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Grace Collins of Memorial High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade Texas Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Collins is the first Gatorade Texas Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Memorial 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 Collins as Texas'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, Collins 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-7 junior forward led the Mustangs to a 28-0-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Collins scored 37 goals and passed for 19 assists, netting a pair of goals in Memorial's 3-0 win over Marcus High in the state title game. She scored 11 goals in Memorial's seven-game run to the state title. The Texas Girls Coaches Association Class 4A-5A-6A Player of the Year, Collins was the MVP of the 2018 state tournament. She concluded her junior year with 99 goals and 39 assists in her prep soccer career.

Collins has volunteered locally with Kids Against Hunger, and she has donated her time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Grace Collins is who I fear the most when entering a match," said Becky Cobb, head coach of Klein Oak High. "She is a lethal threat at all times, and you just don't see many players with her speed, strength and skill level combined."

Collins has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Texas Christian University beginning in the fall of 2019.

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.

Collins joins recent Gatorade Texas Girls Soccer Players of the Year Diana Ordonez (2016-17, Prosper High School), Cyera Hintzen (2015-16, SacHigh Schoole High School), Jordie Harr (2014-15 & 2013-14, SacHigh Schoole High School), Katie Martin (2012-13, Highland Park High School), Jana Jeffrey (2011-12, Ursuline Academy), Meghan Streight (2010-11, McKinney Boyd High School), Chioma Ubogagu (2009-10, Coppell), Alina Garciamendez-Rowold (2008-09, Ursuline Academy), Ashley Rape (2007-08, Greenhill School), and Melissa Henderson (2006-07, Berkner) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Collins 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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