

## **BLUE VALLEY SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KANSAS BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 6, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Aidan Bates of Blue Valley Southwest High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Bates is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Blue Valley Southwest 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 Bates as Kansas'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, Bates joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West High School, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire High School, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.).

The 6-foot-3, 180-pound senior forward led the Timberwolves to a 16-4 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Bates recorded 26 goals and 14 assists, including two of each in a 6-0 win over Maize South High in the state final. A United Soccer Coaches All-American selection, Bates participated in the High School All-American Game. He concluded his prep soccer career with 75 goals and 34 assists.

Bates has volunteered locally at a senior citizen center and as a peer tutor and mentor. "Aidan Bates is one of the most complete players I have coached against in the last 25 years," said K. Dean Snell, head coach of Blue Valley High School.

Bates has maintained a weighted 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Bates joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Players of the Year Noah Mabry (2017-18, Blue Valley West High School), Miguel Baca (2016-17, Dodge City High School), Lucas Bartlett (2015-16, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School), Austin Halsey (2014-15, Washburn Rural High School) and Steven Enna (2013-14, St. James Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Bates also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).