

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 6, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Ryan Sledjeski of Bedford High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Sledjeski is the second Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Bedford 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 Sledjeski as New Hampshire'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, Sledjeski 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 5-foot-8, 165-pound senior defender scored 14 goals and passed for 12 assists this past season, leading the Bulldogs (18-1) to the Division 1 state championship. A three-time First Team All-State honoree, Sledjeski was also a two-time All-New England selection by the United Soccer Coaches and played in the High School All-American Game.

Sledjeski has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, a soup kitchen and youth soccer programs. "Sledjeski was just a dominant center defender for Bedford," said Josh Downing, head coach at Nashua North High School. "He covered a lot of ground, he was outstanding in the air, and a lot of their offense started from him in the back."

Sledjeski has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Providence College 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.

Sledjeski joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Players of the Year Taylor Silverstein (2017-18, Concord High School), Jacob Gould (2016-17, Exeter High School), Asa Berolzheimer (2015-16, Hanover High School), Kyle Hicks (2014-15, Pinkerton Academy) and Daniel Hazlett (2013-14, Hanover High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Sledjeski 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.