

**SWANSBORO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Cannon Tootle of Swansboro High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Tootle is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Swansboro 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 Tootle as North Carolina'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, Tootle 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-9, 140-pound senior midfielder and forward scored 12 goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Pirates (9-7-3) to the Class 3A East Region tournament quarterfinals. A unanimous selection as the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association State Player of the Year, Tootle was a United Soccer Coaches All-American honoree and participated in the High School All-American Game. He concluded his prep soccer career with 59 goals and 53 assists.

Tootle has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and referee, and has donated his time to Hurricane Florence relief and clean-up. "Cannon was the best player we saw this year," said Charles Dailey, head coach of West Carteret High. "He has fantastic skills and, in particular, is a great dribbler. He can hold the ball under pressure and deliver the perfect pass."

Tootle maintained a weighted 4.19 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Tootle inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for him to enroll at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where he will play soccer. He graduated from high school in January and recently completed his first semester at UNCW.

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.

Tootle joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Players of the Year Izaiah Vignali (2017-18, A.C. Reynolds High School), Camden Holbrook (2016-17, Green Hope High School), Nick Hughes (2015-16, Franklin Academy), Clayton Sparks (2014-15, Jacksonville High School) and Austin Stamey (2013-14, T.C. Roberson High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Tootle 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.

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