

## MONTGOMERY ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

**CHICAGO** (June 13, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Tara Katz of Montgomery Academy** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Katz is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Montgomery Academy.

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 Katz as Alabama'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, Katz 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 for Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-05, 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-2 senior forward led the Eagles to a 23-2-1 record and the Class 4A-5A state championship this past season. Katz scored 66 goals and passed for 28 assists, setting up both of Montgomery's goals 2-1 win over Southside in the state final. A three-time State Tournament MVP, Katz is a five-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her prep soccer career with 225 goals.

A class representative on Montgomery Academy's student-led honor council, Katz has volunteered locally with her school's H.E.A.R.T. Community Service Club. "Tara's impact on the field was big," said Jay Hammond, head coach of Westminster School of Oak Mountain. "There isn't a team that can effectively defend her and her activity in a game."

Katz has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Katz joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jasmine Greene (2017-18, Spain Park High School), Eva Knapstein (2016-17, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), Julia Pack (2015-16, Oak Mountain High School), Leigh Haynes (2014-15, Mountain Brook High School) and Claudia Day (2013-14, Briarwood Christian School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Katz also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She 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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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