

COLORADO ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 13, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Mari Annest of Colorado Academy** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Annest is the first Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Colorado 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 Annest as Colorado'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, Annest 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-7 senior midfielder led the Mustangs to a 19-1 record and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Annest recorded 39 goals and 16 assists, including a pair of scores in the team's 3-0 win over Jefferson Academy in the state final. She posted 13 multi-goal games, including seven hat tricks. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Annest did not play high school soccer as a junior. She concluded her prep soccer career with 68 goals and 26 assists.

Annest has volunteered locally with Student H.O.P.E. at Colorado Academy, and she has donated her time as a youth soccer coach. "Mari has always been a standout player," said Denise Sutton, head coach of Jefferson Academy. "She finished a goal in her team's state final win against us that was comparable to a college-level direct kick."

Annest has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Northwestern University 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.

Annest joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Players of the Year Hailey Stodden (2017-18, Broomfield High School), Shae Holmes (2016-17, ThunderRidge High School), Julie Mackin (2015-16, Castle View High School), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School) and Kaycie Young (2013-14, Rock Canyon High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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