

STEVENS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Lexie Wood of Stevens High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Wood is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Stevens 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 Wood as South Dakota'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, Wood 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-4 senior midfielder scored 15 goals and passed for nine assists this past season, leading the Raiders (11-3-1) to the Class AA state title game. Wood was a First Team All-State selection and the MVP of the South Dakota State All-Star Game. She concluded her prep soccer career with 22 goals and 14 assists.

Wood has volunteered locally at the Rapid City Regional Hospital and as a youth soccer coach. "Lexie is a hard-working and crafty little player who never tires of working to improve her game," said Mark Morgan, head coach of Rapid City Central High. "She was part of my game plan to man-mark her under high pressure to keep her skills in check."

Wood has maintained a 3.51 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of South Dakota 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.

Wood joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Joana Zanin (2017-18, T.F. Riggs High School), Theresa Pujado (2016-17 & 2015-16, O'Gorman High School), Jessica Ryan (2014-15, Belle Fourche High School) and KJ Medler (2013-14, St. Thomas More High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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