

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Tess Belnap of Arlington Memorial High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Belnap is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Arlington Memorial 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 Belnap as Vermont'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, Belnap 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-5 senior midfielder scored 37 goals and passed for 14 assists this past season, leading the Eagles (17-1) to the Division 4 state championship. A United Soccer Coaches All-American, Belnap is a four-time All-Conference selection and twice earned First Team All-State honors from the Burlington Free Press.

Also a talented musician and an altar server at her church, Belnap has volunteered locally on behalf of the U.S. Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program serving young athletes with disabilities. "Tess Belnap was always clearly the most talented player on the field, but she also exhibited strong leadership and sportsmanship," said Kevin Murphy, head coach of Long Trail School. "She's not only a lethal offensive scorer. She's equally adept at controlling the midfield and setting her teammates up for scoring opportunities."

Belnap has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will attend Williams College this fall, where she will play soccer.

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.

Belnap joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Players of the Year Natalie Durieux (2017-18, Champlain Valley Union High School), Georgia Lord (2016-17, Burr and Burton Academy), Abby McKearin (2015-16, Proctor High School), Madison Feeney (2014-15, Burlington High School) and Katie Stames (2013-14, Peoples Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

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