

**WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 8, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Vaughn Simpson of West Valley High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Simpson is the first Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from West Valley 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 Simpson as Alaska'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, Simpson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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 (2004-05, 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 6-foot-3, 190-pound senior defender led the Wolfpack to a 44-7-3 combined record in his three varsity seasons, anchoring a defense that recorded 30 shutouts. Simpson scored eight goals and passed for 19 assists in his prep career, including five goals and nine assists during the 2019 season. He is a two-time First Team All-Railbelt Conference selection.

Simpson has volunteered locally on behalf of a recycling initiative and youth soccer programs. "Vaughn has been a fantastic player and leader on the pitch," said West Valley coach Howard Maxwell. "He's a student of the game and a very intelligent player who challenges himself whenever possible. He demonstrates a very strong work ethic, a skill that carries over to his academic pursuits as well."

Simpson has maintained a 4.35 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer at the Colorado School of Mines.

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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Simpson joins recent Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Players of the Year Jack Green (2018-19, West Anchorage High School), Noah Krozel (2017-18, Colony High School), Bubacar Touray (2016-17, West Anchorage High School), Talon Stanley (2015-16, South Anchorage High School) and Jack Sedor (2014-15 & 2013-14, Dimond High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.