

**SALESIANUM SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Drew Blackwell of Salesianum School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Blackwell is the twelfth Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Salesianum 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 Blackwell as Delaware'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, Blackwell 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 5-foot-11, 175-pound senior midfielder led the Sallies to a 17-1 record and their 10th straight Division I state championship this past season. Blackwell tallied 18 goals and eight assists, including a hat trick in Salesianum's 7-0 win over Caesar Rodney High in the state final. The Delaware High School Soccer Coaches Association Player of the Year, Blackwell was a two-time First Team All-State selection. He concluded his prep soccer career with 36 goals and 26 assists.

Blackwell has volunteered locally at a center for the disabled, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his school's National Honor Society. "Drew had a great presence and consistently affected the match positively for his team," said Carlos Villa, head coach of Sussex Tech. "He also seemed to bring a good mix to the chemistry of the Sals' squad. With so many quality players, leadership and camaraderie are vital to success—he did that very well."

Blackwell has maintained a weighted 4.11 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of New Hampshire 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. 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.

Blackwell joins recent Gatorade Delaware Boys Soccer Players of the Year Tommy McGrail (2018-19, Salesianum School), Bryce Wallace (2017-18, Salesianum School), Jason Blackwell (2016-17, Salesianum School), Matt Dina (2015-16, Appoquinimink High School), Sam Jester (2014-15, Appoquinimink High School), and Dylan Huber (2013-14, Salesianum 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.

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