

**LASSITER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Vedad Kovac of Lassiter High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Georgia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Kovac is the fourth Gatorade Georgia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Lassiter 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 Kovac as Georgia'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, Kovac 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-8, 145-pound senior forward led the Trojans to a 7-1 record this spring before the season was cancelled. Kovac totaled 17 goals and 14 assists with three hat tricks in eight games. The 2019 4-AAAAAAA Region Player of the Year, Kovac is a member of the Under-19 Bosnian National Team. He concluded his prep soccer career with 47 goals and 25 assists.

An avid artist, Kovac has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects and as a youth soccer coach. "Vedad is a natural finisher and a hard worker on the field," said Samer Kaddah, head coach of Pope High. "He has some great vision on the field and provides many assists when he is not scoring himself."

Kovac has maintained a weighted 3.65 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Michigan State University.

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.

Kovac joins recent Gatorade Georgia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Omar Hernandez (2018-19, Dalton High School), Omar Hernandez (2017-18, Dalton High School), Jake Donaldson (2016-17, McIntosh High School), Josh Bronstorph (2015-16, Dunwoody High School), Steven Moore (2014-15, Houston County High School), and Adam Sheikali (2013-14, McIntosh 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.

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