

**CALVERT HALL COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 8, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Ben Bender of Calvert Hall College High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Bender is the third Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Calvert Hall College 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 Bender as Maryland'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, Bender 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-1, 165-pound senior midfielder recorded 14 goals and four assists this past season, leading the Cardinals (9-7-1) to the Maryland Independent Athletic Association Class A Tournament semifinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, he participated in the High School All-American Game in December. Ranked as the nation's No. 139 prospect in the Class of 2020 by TopDrawerSoccer.com, he concluded his prep soccer career with 33 goals and 17 assists.

Bender has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Ben is such a talented and versatile player," said Jon Seal, head coach of the Gilman School. "He has tremendous pace, he can score from distance, is dangerous on set pieces, and he knows where to go with the ball. He makes everyone around him better."

Bender has maintained a 3.45 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland.

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.

Bender joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Players of the Year Daniel Diaz-Bonilla (2018-19, The Heights School), Justin Gielen (2017-18, DeMatha Catholic High School), Nick Richardson (2016-17, Archbishop Curley High School), Michael DeShields (2015-16, McDonogh School), Connor Smith (2014-15, McDonogh School), and George Campbell (2013-14, McDonogh 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).