

**FOREST HILLS NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Aidan O'Connor of Forest Hills Northern High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year. O'Connor is the second Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Forest Hills Northern 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 O'Connor as Michigan'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, O'Connor 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-4, 201-pound senior defender led the Huskies to a 23-0-1 record and the Division II state championship this past season. O'Connor anchored a defense that compiled 17 shutouts and allowed just eight scores. He also chipped in offensively with 12 goals and four assists. The Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association's Mr. Soccer winner, he is a two-time MIHSSCA Dream Team selection.

A member of his school's Diversity Club, O'Connor has volunteered locally on behalf of the Refugee Education Center in West Michigan and as a peer tutor. "Simply put, Aidan O'Connor was a force," said Karl Johnson, head coach of Northview High. "He was very physical but in a very intelligent way. The goal for my team was to avoid his side of the field. We did so with very limited success."

O'Connor has maintained a 3.50 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Western Michigan 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.

Two-time winner O'Connor joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Players of the Year Ryan Pierson (2017-18, Detroit Catholic Central High School), Dalton Michael (2016-17, Traverse City West Senior High School), Anthony Bowie (2015-16, Forest Hills Central High School), DeJuan Jones (2014-15, East Lansing High School), and Alec Lasinski (2013-14, Skyline 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](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).

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