

**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Heath Flathau of Sacred Heart Catholic School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Flathau is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Sacred Heart Catholic 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 Flathau as Mississippi'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, Flathau 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-9, 165-pound senior midfielder scored 20 goals and passed for 12 assists this past season, leading the Crusaders (18-2-3) to the Class 1A/2A/3A state championship. A Clarion-Ledger First Team All-State selection, Flathau was also the District MVP and the Pine Belt Sports Player of the Year.

Flathau has volunteered locally on behalf of the U.S. Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program serving young athletes with disabilities. "Heath Flathau is probably the most gifted technical player I've seen," said Todd Siders, head coach at Sumrall High School. "He has a quickness on the ball that is rare, and can change direction and pace on a dime. He has great field vision as well and distributes the ball with a lot of accuracy."

Flathau has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

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.

Flathau joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Players of the Year Ashton LeBlanc (2018-19, Gulfport High School), Ashton LeBlanc (2017-18, Gulfport High School), Sumner Richardson (2016-17, Northwest Rankin High School), Ridge Brohaugh (2015-16, Madison Central High School), Wanner Paiz (2014-15, Terry High School), and Ridge Brohaugh (2013-14, Madison Central 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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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