

**VERONA AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 Eliot Popkewitz of Verona Area High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Popkewitz is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Verona Area 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 Popkewitz as Wisconsin'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, Popkewitz 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, 163-pound senior midfielder scored 14 goals and passed for 16 assists this past season, leading the Wildcats (21-1-2) to the Division 1 state championship. A First Team All-State honoree, Popkewitz was the Wisconsin State Journal Player of the Year, the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year and a United Soccer Coaches All-Region selection.

A member of his school's Engineering Club, Popkewitz has volunteered locally on behalf of a food pantry and youth soccer programs. "Eliot Popkewitz is a complete player," said Ben Kollasch, head coach at Middleton High School. "He's dangerous as an attacker, he uses space really well and he has really good vision. Maybe his best attribute, though, is his soccer intelligence. He can change what he does and adjust to the opportunities he sees."

Popkewitz has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Wisconsin.

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.

Popkewitz joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Soccer Players of the Year Carter Abbott (2018-19, Marquette University High School), Matthew Comiskey (2017-18, Whitefish Bay High School), Zak Wegner (2016-17, Arrowhead High School), Alec Philippe (2015-16, Marquette University High School), Peter Raymonds (2014-15, Brookfield East High School), and Adam Pohlman (2013-14, Neenah 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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