

**PARKVIEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 17, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Nieva Gaither of Parkview High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Gaither is the fifth Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Parkview 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 Gaither as Georgia's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Gaither 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 two-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-3 senior forward recorded 13 goals and 11 assists this spring, leading the Panthers to a 6-3 record before the season was cancelled. A three-time United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection, Gaither won the 2020 Gwinnett County Outstanding Senior Award. She concluded her prep soccer career with 100 goals and 41 assists.

Gaither has volunteered locally at a food bank and on behalf of an animal rescue organization in addition to donating her time to Project 101, which gathers school supplies for children in the Philippines. "Nieva is most definitely a creator," said Judson Hamby, head coach of Parkview High. "She can find the smallest of spaces to get past multiple defenders to create shots and scoring opportunities for her team."

Gaither has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Furman 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.

Three-time winner Gaither joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Rachel Jones (2016-17, Collins Hill High School), Ella Stevens (2015-16, Grayson High School), Ella Stevens (2014-15, Grayson High School), and Jennifer Westendorf (2013-14, Grayson 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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