

**VOLCANO VISTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Gabriella Montoya of Volcano Vista High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Montoya is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Volcano Vista 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 Montoya as New Mexico'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, Montoya 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-2 senior defender led the Hawks to a 19-2 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Montoya recorded seven goals and seven assists, and anchored a defense that surrendered just six goals in 21 games. The Class 5A State Player of the Year, she was a 2019 United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection.

Montoya has volunteered locally at a food bank and homeless shelter, and she has donated her time to the Special Olympics and as a youth soccer coach. "Gabby Montoya was the class of our district," said Greg Rusk, head coach of Cleveland High. "She was highly effective and dangerous. She plays on both ends of the field. She's an excellent, offensively minded defender."

Montoya has maintained a weighted 3.51 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of New Mexico.

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.

Montoya joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Players of the Year Eliza Mariner (2018-19, Albuquerque Academy), Brianna Martinez (2017-18, Volcano Vista High School), Lexi Baca (2016-17, Cibola High School), Jordyn Lacy (2015-16, La Cueva High School), Cassie Boren (2014-15, La Cueva High School), and Zoie Hensley (2013-14, Taos 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.