

**LAKE NORMAN CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Ayden Yates of Lake Norman Charter High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Yates is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Lake Norman Charter 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 Yates as North Carolina'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, Yates 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-6 senior forward recorded six goals and two assists this spring, leading the Knights to a 3-0-1 record before the season was cancelled. A three-time First Team All-State selection, Yates is ranked as the nation's No. 191 recruit in the Class of 2020 by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She concluded her prep soccer career with 144 goals and 68 assists.

Yates has volunteered locally as a teacher's aide and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Ayden is the hardest-working player on game day, on the practice field and at home," said David Crutchfield, head coach of Lake Norman Charter High. "She is willing to do what it takes to be the best. Her competitiveness is contagious as is her attitude."

Yates has maintained a weighted 3.75 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Virginia Tech.

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.

Yates joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Year Marissa Hart (2018-19, Providence Day School), Mary Elliott McCabe (2017-18, Charlotte Latin School), Ashlynn Serepca (2016-17, 2015-16, Hough High School), Brianna Pinto (2014-15, Jordan High School), and Morgan Reid (2013-14, Cardinal Gibbons 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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