

**SERVICE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 11, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Hatcher Manning of Service High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Manning is the sixth Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Service 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 Manning as Alaska'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, Manning 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-10, 175-pound senior midfielder and forward scored 21 goals and passed for four assists this past season, leading the Cougars (14-2-1) to the Division 1 state championship. Manning was a First Team All-Conference selection and was named to the All-State Tournament team. He concluded his prep career with 53 goals and 14 assists.

Manning has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank and the U.S. Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program serving young athletes with disabilities. "Hatcher Manning has the size, speed and technical ability that all coaches want in a striker," said Brad Horton, head coach at South Anchorage High. "He's difficult for a defense to handle, and he really stepped up this year."

Manning has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer at Western Washington University this fall.

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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Manning joins recent Gatorade Alaska Boys Soccer Players of the Year Vaughn Simpson (2019-20, West Valley High School), Jack Green (2018-19, West Anchorage High School), Noah Krozel (2017-18, Colony High School), and Bubacar Touray (2016-17, West Anchorage High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Manning has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Manning is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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