

**DODGE CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Alan Lopez of Dodge City High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Lopez is the second Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Dodge City 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 Lopez as Kansas 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, Lopez 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, 169-pound senior forward led the Demons to a 20-0 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Lopez scored 26 goals and passed for 10 assists, including two goals and an assist in the team's 3-1 win over Olathe East High in the state title game. A 2020 United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection, Lopez was also the Class 6A Forward of the Year. He concluded his prep soccer career with a school-record 80 goals along with 35 assists.

Lopez has volunteered locally at the Dodge City branch of the YMCA of Southwest Kansas, and he has donated his time as a youth soccer coach and referee. "Alan did the small things that could change a game," said Saul Hernandez, head coach of Dodge City High. "He carried the team in the state final four. This is a kid who has come so far through hard work, humility and respect for others."

Lopez has maintained a weighted 4.04 GPA in the classroom. Lopez has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Johnson County Community College 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.

Lopez joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Players of the Year Jony Munoz (2019-20, Olathe West High School), Aidan Bates (2018-19, Blue Valley Southwest High School), Noah Mabry (2017-18, Blue Valley West High School), and Miguel Baca (2016-17, Dodge City High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Lopez has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Lopez 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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