

**FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MAINE 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 Gus Ford of Falmouth High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Ford is the sixth Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Falmouth 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 Ford as Maine'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, Ford 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 6-foot-1, 165-pound senior forward scored 13 goals and passed for three assists this past season, leading the Yachtsmen to an 8-1-1 record. The Class A Player of the Year, Ford was also named a United Soccer Coaches All-American. He graduates as a two-time All-State selection and a three-time All-Southern Maine Athletic Association honoree.

Ford has volunteered locally on behalf of his school's Big Buddies program and at a youth soccer camp. "Gus Ford was the best player I saw this season," said Mike Andreasen, head coach at Greely High School. "Even on a talented team, he still found ways to always stand out. He was the difference-maker between Falmouth being a very good team and being an exceptional one."

Ford has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He will attend St. Joseph's College this fall, where he will play soccer.

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.

Ford joins recent Gatorade Maine Boys Soccer Players of the Year Bilal Hersi (2019-20 & 2018-19, Lewiston High School), Michael Tahiru (2017-18, Hebron Academy), and Carson Atherley (2016-17, Bangor High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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