

**MANCHESTER CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 11, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Samuel Latona of Manchester Central High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Latona is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Manchester Central 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 Latona as New Hampshire'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, Latona 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, 160-pound senior midfielder scored 12 goals and passed for eight assists this past season, leading the Little Green (9-1-2) to the Division 1 quarterfinals. A First Team All-State honoree, Latona was also named an All-American by the United Soccer Coaches. He concluded his prep career with 40 goals and 34 assists.

Latona has served as a tutor for younger students and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs. "What I saw with Sam Latona was a player like a quarterback, able to see the whole pitch and read the game one or two plays ahead of everyone else," said Joe Burrows, head coach at Manchester Memorial High School. "He's the kind of player every coach would want to have."

Latona has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Cornell University 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.

Latona joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Soccer Players of the Year Charlie Adams (2019-20, Hanover High School), Ryan Sledjeski (2018-19, Bedford High School), Taylor Silverstein (2017-18, Concord High School), and Jacob Gould (2016-17, Exeter High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Latona has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Latona 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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