

**GILL ST. BERNARD'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Micaah Garnette of Gill St. Bernard's School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Garnette is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gill St. Bernard's 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 Garnette as New Jersey'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, Garnette 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-9, 150-pound senior forward led the Knights to a 13-0-1 record and the Central West C, Non-Public Tournament championship this past season. Garnette scored 21 goals and passed for 14 assists including one of each in Gill's 3-2 win over the Pingry School in the sectional title game. The NJ.com Player of the Year, Garnette was a 2020 United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection. He concluded his prep soccer career with 62 goals and 30 assists.

Garnette has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Micaah is a constant threat to score or create a goal for a teammate," said Joe LaSpada, head coach of Bernards High. "Just when you think your game plan for stopping him is working, his exceptional speed and soccer sense allow him to elude a defender."

Garnette has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. Garnette has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at St. John's 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.

Garnette joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Boys Soccer Players of the Year Brendan McSorley (2019-20, Delbarton School), Tommy Scalici (2018-19, Morris Knolls High School), Sebastian Chalbaud (2017-18, St. Benedict's Prep), and Mason Toye (2016-17, Seton Hall Preparatory School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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