

**ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Marcus Garcia of St. Pius X High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Garcia is the fifth Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Pius X 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 Garcia as New Mexico'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, Garcia 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, 175-pound senior forward scored 14 goals and passed for four assists this past season, leading the Sartans to a 3-5 record in a pandemic-shortened campaign. A 2021 First Team All-State selection, Garcia was named to the Best XI squad at last month's High School All-American Game. He concluded his prep soccer career with 52 goals and 33 assists.

A volunteer youth soccer coach for Annunciation Catholic School, Garcia has donated more than 150 hours of his time to the Roadrunner Food Bank over the past four years. "Marcus is a very good player," said Tommy Smith, head coach of Sandia Prep. "He has good size, strength and moves well. He has a good feel on where to be, in and around the box. He shoots well and is not afraid to mix it up physically."

Garcia has maintained a 3.55 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Garcia joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Players of the Year Gabe Legendre (2019-20 & 2018-19, Sue Cleveland High School), Adam Foltz (2017-18, Alamogordo High School), and Charles Touche (2016-17, Albuquerque Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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