

**LA SALLE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Nathan Lagoa of La Salle Academy as its 2020-21 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Lagoa is the eighth Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Lagoa as Rhode Island'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, Lagoa 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 recorded 10 goals and four assists this past season, leading the Rams (8-2) to the Division I state semifinals. Lagoa is a two-time First Team All-Division selection and a 2020 First Team All-State honoree.

Fluent in Portuguese and Spanish, Lagoa has volunteered locally at an area food bank and homeless shelter and as a youth soccer coach. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Nathan works very hard and understands the game very well," said Mario Pereira, head coach of La Salle Academy. "He can play fast with his decision-making, he can play in tight spaces and he is a very strong dribbler in a one-on-one situation. His first touch is impeccable."

Lagoa has maintained a weighted A-minus average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Providence College beginning 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.

Lagoa joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Soccer Players of the Year Roy Barrios (2019-20, Tolman High School), Luis Blanco (2018-19, Tolman High School), Jon Sherman (2017-18, South Kingstown High School), and Poom Mera (2016-17, Moses Brown School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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