

**O'GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Riley Aarbo of O'Gorman High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Aarbo is the first Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from O'Gorman 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 Aarbo as South Dakota'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, Aarbo 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 midfielder led the Knights to a 10-4-3 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Aarbo scored 10 goals and passed for six assists. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Aarbo was a 2020 United Soccer Coaches All-Central Region selection. He concluded his prep soccer career with 37 goals and 24 assists.

Aarbo has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and referee, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "I've seen Riley play for the past five years and his impact is like no other player in our state," said Jud Conner, head coach of Roosevelt High. "This year, he was on another level. He was outstanding in every game."

Aarbo has maintained a weighted 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Northwestern College in Iowa, where he will play soccer, 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.

Aarbo joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Players of the Year Suad Smajlovic (2019-20, Roosevelt High School), Jeremie Benson (2018-19, Washington High School), Isaac Woods (2017-18, Lincoln High School), and Marcus Hluchy (2016-17, Aberdeen Central High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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