

**WORLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WYOMING 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 Cole Venable of Worland High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Wyoming Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Venable is the second Gatorade Wyoming Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Worland 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 Venable as Wyoming'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, Venable 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, 145-pound junior forward scored 40 goals and passed for 14 assists this past season, leading the Warriors (17-0) to the Class 3A state championship. Venable is a First Team All-State honoree and was named Class 3A Underclassman of the Year.

Venable has served as a mentor for elementary school students and has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels and youth soccer programs. "Cole Venable is a very dynamic player," said Dean Schaff, head coach at Lander High. "He's extremely tough to defend and he can compete with anyone. That team works through him on almost every possession."

Venable has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Venable joins recent Gatorade Wyoming Boys Soccer Players of the Year Joe Musselman (2019-20, Buffalo High School), Isaac Howell (2018-19, Thunder Basin High School), Patrick Marchal (2017-18, Green River High School), and Ross Elliott (2016-17, Cheyenne Central High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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