

**CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 15, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Haley Duca of Chelsea High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Duca is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Chelsea 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 Duca as Alabama's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Duca 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-3 senior forward and midfielder scored 38 goals and passed for 19 assists this past season, leading the Hornets (14-6-1) to the Class 6A quarterfinals. A United Soccer Coaches All-Region selection, Duca was also a two-time First Team Super-All State and First Team All-Metro honoree. She concluded her prep career with 100 goals and 52 assists.

Duca has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Christmas Child, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the Shelby County Humane Society, youth soccer programs and an anti-bullying initiative. "Haley Duca is a very talented player," said Adam Johnson, head coach at Mountain Brook High. "She's so smooth on the ball and runs at lightning speed. She covers more ground than any player on the field. She also has a very high soccer IQ and can manufacture goal scoring opportunities seemingly at will."

Duca has maintained a 4.32 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Auburn 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.

Duca joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Players of the Year Morgan White (2019-20, Westminster School at Oak Mountain), Tara Katz (2018-19, Montgomery Academy), Jasmine Greene (2017-18, Spain Park High School), and Eva Knapstein (2016-17, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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