

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 15, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Sophie Nash of North Little Rock High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Nash is the first Gatorade Arkansas Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from North Little Rock 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 Nash as Arkansas' 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, Nash 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-4 senior forward and midfielder scored 34 goals and passed for 15 assists this past season, leading the Charging Wildcats (16-4-3) to the Class 6A semifinals. Nash was an All-State selection and was named the All-Arkansas Preps Player of the Year. She concluded her prep career with 70 goals.

A devoted member of her church's youth ministry, Nash has volunteered locally on behalf of a summer meal program for underprivileged children, a Vacation Bible School, Operation Christmas Child, a women's shelter and youth softball programs. "Sophie Nash is the most impactful talent in our state and the best player in high school soccer," said Kevin DeStefano, head coach at Conway High. "She's just at a different level."

Nash has maintained a 4.02 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Oral Roberts 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.

Nash joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kailyn 'KK' Pavatt (2019-20 & 2018-19, Conway High School), Skylurr Patrick (2017-18, Rogers High School), and Caroline Campbell (2016-17, Bryant High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Nash has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Nash 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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