

**HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Alyssa Thompson of Harvard-Westlake School as its 2020-21 Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Harvard-Westlake 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 Thompson as California'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, Thompson 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 sophomore forward led the Wolverines to an 18-0 record and both the Southern Section, Division 1 and the SoCal Division I Regional championships this past season. Thompson scored 48 goals and passed for 14 assists, tallying a hat trick in a 5-0 win over Villa Park High in the sectional title game and four goals in a 6-1 win over Pacifica High in the regional final. She is a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team and is ranked as the nation's No. 2 prospect in the Class of 2023 by TopDrawerSoccer.com.

Thompson has donated her own money to No Kid Hungry, an organization that supports children dealing with food insecurity. She has also volunteered locally supplying PPE materials to hospital workers and hygiene kits to local foster children. "Alyssa Thompson is on a different level than her other high school counterparts," said Justin Schroeder, head coach of Newport Harbor High. "Her game is refined in a way you'd think she'd be in her mid-20s with her ability to recognize what's happening on the field. I am looking forward to seeing her in a World Cup final one day."

Thompson has maintained a 3.52 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Stanford University beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Thompson joins recent Gatorade California Girls Soccer Players of the Year Grace Watkins (2019-20, Mira Costa High School), Sophie Jones (2018-19, Menlo School), Isabella D'Aquila (2017-18, JSerra Catholic High School), and Kennedy Wesley (2016-17, Valley Christian High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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