

**HEREFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 Payton Patrick of Hereford High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Patrick is the first Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hereford 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 Patrick as Maryland'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, Patrick 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 senior forward led the Bulls to a 7-0 record this past season. Patrick scored 11 goals and passed for eight assists, notching five multi-goal games. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-19 Women's National Team player pool, she is a three-time First Team All-State honoree and was selected to play in last month's High School All-American Game. Ranked as the No. 103 recruit in the Class of 2021 by TopDrawerSoccer.com, she concluded her prep soccer career with 81 goals and 48 assists.

Patrick has developed a training program for young soccer players called ACE (Attitude-Commitment-Execution). She also volunteered locally on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit Alzheimer's research, and she has donated her time at the House of Ruth, a home for abused women and children. "Payton Patrick is a game-changer on the field," said Matt Smoot, head coach of Perry Hall High. "Her pace on and off the ball is a problem for defenders. She has the speed to get on the end of a long pass in behind your backline or she can beat you on the dribble. Payton has a genuine will to win and it shows in her competitive level."

Patrick has maintained a weighted 4.78 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Patrick joins recent Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Players of the Year Baylee DeSmit (2019-20, McDonogh School), Ada Clare Tempert (2018-19, Mercy High School), Abbey Burdette (2017-18, Urbana High School), and Cammie Murtha (2016-17, Walter Johnson High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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