

**DANVERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Arianna Bezanson of Danvers High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Bezanson is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Danvers 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 Bezanson as Massachusetts' 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, Bezanson 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 junior midfielder led the Falcons to an 11-0 record this past season. Bezanson recorded 22 goals and six assists, including at least one goal in 10 of 11 games. A two-time Boston Globe and Boston Herald All-Scholastic selection, she was a 2020 United Soccer Coaches High School All-American honoree. She concluded her junior year with 64 goals and 24 assists in her prep career.

Bezanson hopes to be a surgeon and has volunteered at a nearby hospital. The secretary of the Danvers High junior class, she has also donated her time by collecting shoes for disadvantaged youth and as a youth basketball coach. "Arianna is a phenomenal player—she has an absolutely lethal combination of technical skill, power and intelligence," said Samantha Charest, head coach of Beverly High. "She's relentless on the field and it seems every game it wasn't a matter of if Arianna would score, but more when and in what fashion."

Bezanson has maintained an unweighted 4.01 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Colgate University beginning in the fall of 2022.

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.

Bezanson joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Soccer Players of the Year Cat Barry (2019-20 & 2018-19, Tabor Academy), Kayla Duran (2017-18, Buckingham Browne & Nichols School), and Eve Hewins (2016-17, Hingham High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

###