

**HUNTERDON CENTRAL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Emily Mason of Hunterdon Central Regional High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Mason is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hunterdon Central Regional 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 Mason as New Jersey'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, Mason 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 returning Gatorade National Player of the Year, the 5-foot-9 senior defender and midfielder scored six goals and passed for three assists, leading the Red Devils (12-3) to the Group 4 Central West C tournament semifinals. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-20 Women's National Team, Mason is a two-time United Soccer Coaches High School All-American. The 2020 New Jersey Girls Soccer Coaches Association State Player of the Year, she is ranked as the nation's No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2021 by TopDrawerSoccer.com.

A participant in the Hunterdon Outreach Program supporting special needs children through athletics, Mason has volunteered extensively on behalf of the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, including mentoring in the church's Children's Liturgy of the Word initiative. Also a member of her school's Connect Club, which empowers special needs students through socialization events, she has donated her time fundraising for the Special Olympics as well as the HCRH booster club. Mason was the recipient of her school's Praise Award for creating a pen pal relationship with elementary school children who share the same school bus. "Emily has it all—physically imposing, speed, power, skill and knowledge of the game," said Chris Gerber, head coach of Bridgewater-Raritan High. "You have to account for her every movement as an opposing coach."

Mason has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Rutgers 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.

Two-time winner Mason joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kelli McGroarty (2018-19, Eastern Regional High School), Amy Paternoster (2017-18, Wall High School), and Frankie Tagliaferri (2016-17, Colts Neck High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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