

**ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 Shae O'Rourke of St. Mary's High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year. O'Rourke is the first Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Mary's 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 O'Rourke as New York'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, O'Rourke 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-3 junior forward scored 39 goals and passed for eight assists this past season, leading the Lancers to an 8-2-1 record. The Western New York Player of the Year, O'Rourke was also the Class C Player of the Year, the Monsignor Martin Player of the Year and the Section 6 Player of the Year. She notched eight hat tricks during the pandemic-shortened 11-game season and has recorded 115 career varsity goals.

A member of her school's diversity club and the National Honor Society, O'Rourke has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs. "Shae O'Rourke is quite simply a goal-scorer," said Larry Desautels, head coach at Nichols School. "She's physically very strong and also very quick and fast. Her touches almost always end with a scoring chance."

O'Rourke has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

O'Rourke joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Players of the Year Chloe DeLyser (2019-20 & 2018-19, Marion High School), Molly Feighan (2017-18, Arlington High School), and Madisyn Pezzino (2016-17, Grand Island Senior High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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