

**CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Josie Pecor of Champlain Valley Union High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Pecor is the fourth Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union 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 Pecor as Vermont'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, Pecor 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-7 senior forward scored 21 goals and passed for four assists this past season, leading the Redhawks (10-1) to the Division 1 state final. A United Soccer Coaches All-New England selection, Pecor was the Burlington Free Press Player of the Year and was twice named Metro League Offensive Player of the Year. She concluded her prep career with 57 goals and 23 assists.

A member of her school's Athletic Leadership Council, Pecor founded a suicide-prevention initiative at her school, served as a mentor for elementary school students and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and the National Alliance on Mental Illness. "Josie is a force to be reckoned with," said Lori McClallen, head coach at Rutland High. "She's quick, physical and smart. She can pick a defense apart and find the net quickly. She'll capitalize on any mistake you make."

Pecor has maintained a 4.24 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer at Saint Anselm College 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.

Pecor joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Players of the Year Grace Pinkus (2019-20, Burr & Burton Academy), Tess Belnap (2018-19, Arlington Memorial High School), Natalie Durieux (2017-18, Champlain Valley Union High School), and Georgia Lord (2016-17, Burr and Burton Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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