

**WHEELING PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Graceylyn Hanna of Wheeling Park High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Hanna is the second Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Wheeling Park 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 Hanna as West Virginia'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, Hanna 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 senior midfielder led the Patriots to a 19-2 record and the Class AAA state championship this past season. Hanna scored 15 goals and passed for 27 assists, and had the lone score in Wheeling Park's 1-0 win over Parkersburg South High in the state final. The West Virginia High School Soccer Coaches Association's Class AAA Player of the Year, Hanna is a three-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her prep soccer career with 55 goals and 101 assists.

Hanna started a tutoring business for all ages to help students with remote learning. She has volunteered locally as a babysitter and as a youth soccer coach. "Graceylyn Hanna is an outstanding player and team leader," said Brad Morris, head coach of Parkersburg High. "She is a crafty midfielder who connects the dots and reads the game very well."

Hanna has maintained a weighted 4.67 GPA in the classroom. She will attend West Liberty State 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.

Hanna joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sammie Brown (2019-20, Morgantown High School), McKenzie Moran (2018-19, St. Joseph Central Catholic High School), Emilie Charles (2017-18, Cabell Midland High School), and Mary Lawman (2016-17, Winfield High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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