

**TAFT SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 16, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kelvin 'KK' Baffour** of **Taft School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Baffour is the second Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Taft 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 Baffour as Connecticut's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Baffour 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, 140-pound senior midfielder scored 29 goals and passed for 19 assists this past season, leading the Rhinos (19-1) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class A Tournament championship game. A United Soccer Coaches All-New England selection, Baffour recorded at least one point in 19 of Taft's 20 games. He participated in the High School All-American Game in December and is ranked as the No. 82 recruit in the Class of 2022 by TopDrawerSoccer.com.

A native of Ghana who came to Taft through the Right To Dream Academy, Baffour has volunteered locally speaking to students at Fairfield Country Day School about Africa. He has also donated his time as a dorm monitor and peer mentor at Taft. "KK is phenomenally good," said Charlie Bour, head coach of the Berkshire School. "He can create for others or finish on his own. He's not big, but his pace and skill are of professional quality."

Baffour has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Baffour joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Players of the Year Scott Testori (2020-21, Daniel Hand High School), Sammed Bawa (2019-20, Taft School), and Michael Suski (2018-19 & 2017-18, Loomis Chaffee School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Baffour has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Baffour is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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