

**TAMPA PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 **Santiago Castaneda** of **Tampa Preparatory School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Castaneda is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Tampa Preparatory 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 Castaneda as Florida'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, Castaneda 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 6-foot-2, 155-pound junior midfielder led the Terrapins to a 21-0 record and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Castaneda scored 16 goals and passed for 19 assists, including one score in Tampa Prep's 2-0 win over Ransom Everglades in the state title game. The Class 3A State Player of the Year, he concluded his junior year with 27 goals and 34 assists in his prep soccer career.

Castaneda has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach. "Santi is mature beyond his age on the field," said Kevin McCarron, head coach of Tampa Catholic High School. "He plays with a level of confidence and comfort not often seen in a junior. He has a knack for finding soft spots in opposing defenses and exploiting them."

Castaneda has maintained a weighted 4.06 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Castaneda joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Players of the Year Marcello Valbuena (2020-21, Tampa Catholic High School), Santa Ihara (2019-20, Montverde Academy), Leo Perez (2018-19, Mariner High School), and Reed Davis (2017-18, Fleming Island High 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, Castaneda 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. Castaneda 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.