

**MCDONOGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **Jacob Murrell** of **McDonogh School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Murrell is the eighth Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from McDonogh 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 Murrell as Maryland'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, Murrell 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, 175-pound senior forward scored 41 goals and passed for 20 assists this past season, leading the Eagles (21-3) to the Maryland Independent Athletic Association Class A state tournament championship game. Murrell compiled 12 multi-goal games, including four hat tricks and four four-goal games. The Baltimore Sun All-Metro Player of the Year and a United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection, he was named to the game's Best XI at the High School All-American Game in December.

Murrell has volunteered locally with the Char Hope Foundation, dedicated to helping adults in the Maryland agricultural community who are facing the challenges of substance abuse. He has also donated his time as a youth soccer coach. "I have coached in the league for 22 years and without a doubt Jacob is among the best that I have seen in my time as a high school coach," said Barry Stitz, head coach of Archbishop Curley High School. "He is a very technical player, but also has that grit and determination that takes his play to the next level. He is two-footed, has the ability to score goals in many different ways and reads the game very well."

Murrell has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Georgetown 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Murrell joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Players of the Year Tyquan Stroud (2020-21, Mount Saint Joseph High School), Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School), Daniel Diaz-Bonilla (2018-19, The Heights School), and Justin Gielen (2017-18, DeMatha Catholic 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, Murrell 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. Murrell 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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