

**SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Alex Waggoner** of **Santa Fe High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Waggoner is the first Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Santa Fe 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 Waggoner as New Mexico'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, Waggoner 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, 160-pound junior forward led the Demons to a 22-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Waggoner tallied 73 goals and 16 assists, including scoring all four goals in Santa Fe's 4-3, overtime win over Sandia High School in the state final. He scored eight goals in three state tournament games. The Class 5A Player of the Year, he is also a United Soccer Coaches All-American selection.

Waggoner has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and mentor. "Alex is a true striker and can score if you give him any room, whatsoever," said Shaun Gill, head coach of V. Sue Cleveland High School. "Alex is really good on the ball and has an awesome shot. They would not have won the state championship without him."

Waggoner has maintained a 4.0 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.

Waggoner joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Players of the Year Marcus Garcia (2020-21, St. Pius X High School), Gabe Legendre (2019-20 & 2018-19, V. Sue Cleveland High School), and Adam Foltz (2017-18, Alamogordo 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, Waggoner 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. Waggoner 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.