

**WAKELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 16, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Brennan Bezdek** of **Wakeland High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Texas Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Bezdek is the second Gatorade Texas Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Wakeland 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 Bezdek as Texas' 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, Bezdek 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-11, 180-pound senior forward and midfielder led the Wolverines to a 24-4-1 record and the Conference 5A state championship this past season. Bezdek scored 15 goals and passed for 18 assists, and he had one assist in Wakeland's 3-0 win over Dripping Springs High in the state final. A two-time Dallas Morning News Player of the Year, he led Wakeland to two state titles and concluded his prep soccer career with 44 goals and 40 assists.

A two-time state champion in DECA, a national business and entrepreneurship club, Bezdek has volunteered locally with the Young Men's Service League and as a youth soccer coach. "I've gotten to watch Brennan since he was a freshman and the kid has always made an impact on the field," said Kenny Hegmann, head coach of Lebanon Trail High School. "It's tough to game-plan around him because he is a well-rounded player and can float into a lot of different positions. His movement off the ball and the pressure that he put on us constantly made it very difficult for us to attack."

Bezdek has maintained an A average in the classroom. He will attend Northeastern University in Boston 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.

Bezdek joins recent Gatorade Texas Boys Soccer Players of the Year Bryce Boneau (2020-21, Keller High School), Mayno Linares (2019-20, Elsik High School), Andrew Erickson (2018-19, Legacy of Educational Excellence High School), and Jose Umana (2017-18, Elsik 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, Bezdek 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. Bezdek 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).