

**BLESSED TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June, 23, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Riley Jackson** of **Blessed Trinity Catholic High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Jackson is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Blessed Trinity Catholic 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 Jackson as Georgia's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Jackson 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-8 sophomore midfielder scored 14 goals and passed for 18 assists this past season, leading the Titans (19-2-1) to the Class AAAAA state semifinals. Jackson missed the high school postseason while she was leading the U.S. Soccer Under-17 Women's National Team to the championship at the CONCACAF World Cup qualifying tournament. Jackson was the Golden Ball winner, awarded to the tournament's best player. Also the Class AAAAA State Player of the Year, she concluded her sophomore year with 36 goals and 48 assists in her prep soccer career.

Jackson has volunteered locally as a youth soccer instructor and camp coach and she's also a USSF certified, paid soccer referee. "Riley Jackson can change the game with one touch of the ball," said Jason Page, head coach of Walton High School. "She can out-work any player on the field, her vision is national-elite level and she has precision passing with amazing touch."

Jackson has maintained a weighted 4.26 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Jackson joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Henley Tippins (2020-21, The Westminster Schools), and Nieva Gaither (2019-20, 2018-19, & 2017-18, Parkview 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, Jackson 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. Jackson 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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