

**CIBOLA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Emily Aguilar** of **Cibola High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Aguilar is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Cibola 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 Aguilar as New Mexico'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, Aguilar joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lallas (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-6 senior midfielder led the Cougars to a 17-2-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Aguilar scored 18 goals and passed for seven assists, and assisted on the game's only goal during Cibola's 1-0 victory over Carlsbad High in the state final. A 2021 United Soccer Coaches All-American selection, Aguilar is also a two-time First Team All-State honoree. She concluded her prep soccer career with 38 goals and 22 assists.

A student senator at Cibola High, Aguilar has volunteered locally at a food bank and homeless shelter. She has also donated her time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Emily is by far the best player in the state," said Amber Ashcraft, head coach of La Cueva High School. "The way Emily would control the game was amazing. She was consistent throughout the season."

Aguilar has maintained a weighted 3.53 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs 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.

Aguilar joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Players of the Year Alexa Dugan (2020-21, Carlsbad High School), Gabriella Montoya (2019-20, Volcano Vista High School), Eliza Mariner (2018-19, Albuquerque Academy), and Brianna Martinez (2017-18, Volcano Vista 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, Aguilar 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. Aguilar 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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