

**HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Tanum Nelson** of **Harwood Union High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Nelson is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Harwood Union 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 Nelson as Vermont'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, Nelson 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-9 senior midfielder scored 35 goals and passed for 14 assists this past season, leading the Highlanders (14-2-1) to the Division 2 state semifinals. A United Soccer Coaches All-American, Nelson was named Player of the Year by both the Burlington Free Press and the Times Argus. Also the three-time Capital League Player of the Year, she concluded her prep career with 103 goals.

A member of the National Honor Society, Nelson has volunteered locally on behalf of her school's chapter of the Rooted Organizing Community, a youth-led social justice initiative. "Tanum Nelson is an absolute nightmare to play against," said Tyler Post, head coach at Stowe High School. "She's tall and fast with a high work rate, and she's aggressive both offensively and defensively. From an opponent's perspective, she is not the player that you ever want to face with the ball at her feet."

Nelson has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer at Cornell 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.

Nelson joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Players of the Year Josie Pecor (2020-21, Champlain Valley Union High School), Grace Pinkus (2019-20, Burr and Burton Academy), Tess Belnap (2018-19, Arlington Memorial High School), and Natalie Durieux (2017-18, Champlain Valley Union 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, Nelson 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. Nelson 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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