

**HALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 16, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Lucas Almeida** of **Hall High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Almeida is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hall 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 Almeida as Connecticut'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, Almeida joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School, Md.), Jacob Shaffelburg (2017-18, Berkshire School, Mass.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire School, Mass.) and Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-1, 155-pound senior forward scored 44 goals and passed for nine assists this past season, leading the Titans (20-1-2) to the Class LL state championship match. The 2022 United Soccer Coaches High School National Player of the Year, Almeida is also a two-time USC All-American selection. An Under-16 Elite Clubs National League All-American with his club team, Almeida concluded his prep soccer career with 105 goals and 31 assists.

Almeida has volunteered locally doing yard work for elderly neighbors, and he has donated his time at a food pantry and as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research. "Lucas is a once-in-a-generation player," said Mike McCullough, head coach of Simsbury High School. "He is the fastest player with the ball that I've ever seen. He gets behind your last line in the blink of an eye and creates chances for himself and his teammates."

Almeida has maintained a 3.07 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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.

Almeida joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Players of the Year Kelvin 'KK' Baffour (2021-22, Taft School), Scott Testori (2020-21, Daniel Hand High School), Sammed Bawa (2019-20, Taft School), and Michael Suski (2018-19, Loomis Chaffee School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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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