

**ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 16, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Connor Dunnigan** of **St. Andrew's Episcopal School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Dunnigan is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Andrew's Episcopal 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 Dunnigan as Mississippi'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, Dunnigan 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, 183-pound senior midfielder and forward led the Saints to a 14-3-1 record and the Class 1A/2A/3A state championship this past season. Dunningan scored 17 goals and passed for 12 assists, tallying two of each in the team's 5-2 win over Sacred Heart Academy in the state title game, earning MVP honors in the process. Also the 2022 Class 3A individual and team state champion in golf, he was a First Team All-State selection as a wide receiver for the St. Andrew's football team as a senior.

The founder of the St. Andrew's Ping Pong Club, Dunnigan has volunteered locally as a youth soccer and golf coach. "Every opposing coach had a game plan to deal with Connor," said Phil Buffington, head coach of Jackson Academy. "If they didn't, he made sure they made adjustments immediately on the field to contain him. He has an incredible attitude and demeanor on the field that anyone wishes their team leaders would possess."

Dunnigan has maintained a 3.50 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Furman University (S.C.) 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.

Dunnigan joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Players of the Year Luke Hopkins (2021-22, Clinton High School), Emery Thigpen (2020-21, Jackson Academy), Heath Flathau (2019-20, Sacred Heart Catholic School), and Ashton LeBlanc (2018-19, Gulfport High 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](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).