

**STEVENS HIGH STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Zack Williams** of **Stevens High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Williams is the first Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Stevens 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 Williams as South Dakota'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, Williams 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-2, 180-pound senior forward and midfielder led the Raiders to a 13-2-1 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Williams scored seven goals and was named the 2022 Argus Leader State Player of the Year. A three-time First Team All-State selection, he concluded his prep soccer career with a school-record 58 goals.

Williams was a student representative in a suicide-prevention video for the Rapid City school district. He has volunteered locally at a shelter for the unhoused and as a youth soccer coach. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his school's National Honor Society. "Williams is a very good goal-scorer with a nose for the frame," said Joe Sabrowski, head coach of Rapid City Central High School. "[This year] Williams realized he didn't need to be the goal scorer and changed roles midway through the season, facilitating the team's ability to dominate the midfield and allow for the faster, creative players up top to find more success. Hence, they won the state title."

Williams has maintained a weighted 3.82 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Metropolitan State University in Denver 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Soccer Players of the Year Tyson Reitsma (2021-22, Sioux Falls Christian High School), Riley Aarbo (2020-21, O'Gorman High School), Suad Smajlovic (2019-20, Roosevelt High School), and Jeremie Benson (2018-19, Washington 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.