

**OAK MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 23, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kierson McDonald** of **Oak Mountain High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. McDonald is the fourth Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Oak Mountain 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 McDonald as Alabama'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, McDonald joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alyssa Thompson (2020-21, Harvard-Westlake School, Calif.), Mallory Swanson (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.), Heather O'Reilly (2002-03 & 2001-02, East Brunswick High School, N.J.) and Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of Young Women, N.Y.).

The 5-foot-10 senior played minutes as a defender, midfielder and forward this past season, leading the Eagles (22-4) to the 7A state semifinals. McDonald recorded 31 goals and passed for 15 assists to earn First-Team All-State honors. Oak Mountain won more than 100 games during her tenure.

A National Honor Society member, McDonald has volunteered locally on behalf of the Auburn tornado relief effort and has donated her time by serving the YMCA. She also has participated in multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Kierson is dominant in all facets and has a killer instinct when it comes to winning," said Thompson High School head coach Dan DeMasters. "She is a stellar left-footed player."

McDonald has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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.

McDonald joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Players of the Year Isabel Smith (2021-22, Mountain Brook High School), Haley Duca (2020-21, Chelsea High School), Morgan White (2019-20, Westminster School at Oak Mountain), and Tara Katz (2018-19, Montgomery Academy), 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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