

**JEFFERSON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 **Kate Runyon** of **Jefferson Academy** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Runyon is the first Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Jefferson Academy.

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 Runyon as Colorado'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, Runyon 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 forward led the Jaguars to an 18-2 record and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Runyon scored 30 goals and passed for 14 assists, including a pair of scores in Jefferson Academy's 3-0 win over Manitou Springs High School in the state final. The Class 3A Player of the Year, she was also a three-time First Team All-State selection, concluding her prep soccer career with 68 goals and 34 assists.

An aspiring doctor, Runyon has volunteered locally at the Peak Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Center in Wheat Ridge. She has also donated her time as a mentor to students at Jefferson Academy elementary school. "Every game, Kate is a difference maker," said Rod Muir, head coach of Prospect Ridge Academy. "She can score goals, and if you try to shut her down, she will find ways to play the ball around you. Her soccer IQ is so high and [she has the] skill level to match."

Runyon has maintained a weighted 4.33 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Runyon joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jordan Nytes (2021-22, Grandview High School), Degen Miller (2020-21, Dawson School), Mallory Mooney (2019-20, Broomfield High School), and Mari Annet (2018-19, Colorado 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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