

**MERCY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **Payton Schenning** of **Mercy High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Schenning is the second Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Mercy 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 Schenning as Maryland'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, Schenning 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-7 senior forward and midfielder led the Magic to a 16-1 record and the Independent Athletic Association of Maryland Class A Tournament championship this past season. Schenning scored 22 goals and passed for six assists. She was the 2022 Baltimore Sun Metro Player of the Year after missing her entire junior year with a knee injury. She participated in the High School All-American Game in December.

Schenning has volunteered locally on a fundraising campaign to benefit autism research. She has also donated her time delivering food to inner-city families and as a youth soccer coach. "Payton came in hungry her senior year to prove herself," said Doug Pryor, head coach of Mercy High School. "She played with a chip on her shoulder and also carried a lot of pressure. We were supposed to win the championship last year and she got hurt before the season. This season was a truly magical season with a great player having a magical year."

Schenning has maintained a 3.16 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County 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.

Schenning joins recent Gatorade Maryland Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kelsey Smith (2021-22, McDonogh School), Payton Patrick (2020-21, Hereford High School), Baylee DeSmit (2019-20, McDonogh School), and Ada Clare Tempert (2018-19, Mercy 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.