

**GULFPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Mary Frances Symmes** of **Gulfport High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Symmes is the third Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gulfport 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 Symmes as Mississippi'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, Symmes 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-5 senior midfielder scored 22 goals and passed for 17 assists this past season, leading the Admirals (19-2-2) to the Class 6A state championship game. Symmes is ranked as the nation's No. 61 recruit in the Class of 2023 by PrepSoccer.com. She concluded her prep soccer career with 32 goals and 45 assists.

A member of her school's Beta, Key and Interact clubs, Symmes has volunteered locally at a women's resource center and has donated her time to community beautification projects as well as the Humane Society of South Mississippi. "Mary Frances is an incredible player," said Todd Moniz, head coach of Biloxi High School. "She is extremely versatile, can play anywhere on the field and would be considered the best player at that position regardless of where she was asked to play. She is technically gifted and tactically astute, but what sets her apart is her relentless mindset and approach to the game."

Symmes has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at North Carolina State University 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.

Symmes joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kate Smith (2021-22 & 2020-21, Gulfport High School), Lucy Green (2019-20, West Lauderdale High School), and Morgan O'Connor (2018-19, Oxford 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.