

**RUTGERS PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 **Melina Rebimbas** of **Rutgers Preparatory School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Rebimbas is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Rutgers Preparatory 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 Rebimbas as New Jersey'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, Rebimbas 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7 senior midfielder and forward led the Argonauts to a 17-3 record and the Non-Public B Division state championship this past season. Rebimbas scored 24 goals and passed for 16 assists, including two goals in Rutgers Prep's 3-1 win over DePaul High in the state final. Rebimbas missed nine games during the regular season while playing in the Under-17 Women's World Cup as a member of the U.S. National Team. Ranked as the nation's No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2023 by PrepSoccer.com, she concluded her prep soccer career with 98 goals and 58 assists.

The secretary of the Rutgers Preparatory School Council, Rebimbas has volunteered locally with the Tend to a Friend Club, which matches up older students with special-needs children. She has also donated her time as part of a toy drive for the Ronald McDonald House and as a youth soccer coach. "Melina's soccer IQ is absolutely off the charts," said Sergio Torres, head coach of Holy Cross Prep. "She was three steps ahead of everyone else on that field. Her IQ, accompanied by her technical ability and speed of play, made her deadly."

Rebimbas has maintained a weighted 4.18 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Two-time winner Rebimbas joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Players of the Year Emily Mason (2020-21 & 2019-20, Hunterdon Central Regional High School) and Kelli McGroarty (2018-19, Eastern Regional 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.