

**ARDREY KELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 23, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Taylor Suarez** of **Ardrey Kell High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Suarez is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Ardrey Kell 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 Suarez as North Carolina'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, Suarez 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-5 junior forward led the Knights to a 25-3-1 record and the Class 4A state championship this past season. Suarez scored 36 goals and passed for 33 assists, and netted a goal and two assists in Ardrey Kell's 3-2 win over Ashley High in the state title game. The 2023 North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association's Player of the Year, she concluded her junior year with 73 goals and 59 assists in her prep soccer career.

A member of her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, Suarez has volunteered locally as a youth soccer referee. "She is one of the two best female field players I have come across in my 20-plus years coaching," said Bucky McCarley, head coach of Myers Park High School. "She has tremendous pace, but it's her soccer IQ and technical skill that make her an absolutely amazing player. She is ruthless in the final (offensive) third."

Suarez has maintained a weighted 3.83 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Florida State University beginning in the fall of 2024.

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 Suarez joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Year Asha Means (2020-21, Lake Norman Charter High School), Ayden Yates (2019-20, Lake Norman Charter High School), and Marissa Hart (2018-19, Providence Day 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).