

**CUMBERLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 **Emma Kucal** of **Cumberland High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Kucal is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Cumberland 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 Kucal as Rhode Island'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, Kucal 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-3 sophomore forward led the Clippers to a 14-4 record and a trip to the Division I state semifinals this past season. She scored 20 goals, passed for a state-best 19 assists and recorded at least one point in every game. A Division I First-Team All-State and Providence Journal First-Team All-State selection, she was the only Rhode Island girl to be named a United Soccer Coaches All-American.

Kucal has volunteered locally at Cumberland Fest, an annual food and entertainment festival that has raised more than \$1 million for in-state youth activities, such as sports, scouts and performing arts. "Kucal is a dangerous player — the hardest player [in the state] to mark, for sure," said East Greenwich High School head coach Karen Lockhart. "She's the best offensive player in the state."

Kucal has maintained a 3.84 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Kucal joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sarah Lynch (2021-22, Pilgrim High School), Catherine Clements (2020-21, La Salle Academy), Faith Hutchins (2019-20, South Kingstown High School), and Olivia Freitas (2018-19, La Salle 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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