

**HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Hailee Christensen** of **Harrisburg High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Christensen is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrisburg 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 Christensen as South Dakota'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, Christensen 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-6 junior midfielder and forward led the Tigers to a 16-1-1 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Christensen scored 35 goals and passed for 20 assists, tallying one of each in Harrisburg's 2-1 win over Aberdeen Central High in the state title game. A United Soccer Coaches All-American selection, Christensen missed her entire sophomore season with a knee injury. She concluded her junior year with school records of 51 goals and 32 assists in her prep soccer career.

A member of the Harrisburg High student council, Christensen has volunteered locally with Kids Against Hunger, and she's donated her time both as an elementary school teacher's aide and youth soccer coach. "Hailee is a great player," said Cori Bonte, head coach of Roosevelt High School. "Without Hailee, Harrisburg is not the team they were this year, or the team they'll be next year."

Christensen has maintained a weighted 4.03 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at South Dakota 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.

Christensen joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Tyreese Zacher (2021-22, Brandon Valley High School), Megan Fastenau (2020-21, Aberdeen Central High School), Jaiden Boomsma (2019-20, Yankton High School), and Lexie Wood (2018-19, Stevens 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.