

**OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 14, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Easton Bogard** of **Oak Park and River Forest High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Bogard is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Oak Park and River Forest High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Bogard as Illinois' best high school boys soccer player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Lyle Yorks (1987-88, E.O. Smith High School, Conn.), Alecko Eskandarian (1999-00, Bergen Catholic High School, N.J.) and Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School, Md.).

The 5-foot-9, 155-pound senior midfielder and forward led the Huskies to a 21-1-2 record and the program's first undefeated regular season this past fall. Bogard scored a school single-season record 33 goals and passed for 15 assists. He was named the Illinois High School Coaches Association's Player of the Year and was a United Soccer Coaches All-American selection.

Bogard has volunteered on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program. He is also involved in his school's business club as well as its Launch Leadership program. "Easton makes you plan for him and if you don't, it's to your own detriment," said Jordan Stopka, head coach at York Community High School. "He's a leader and he tracks back. You see his stats, but those don't demonstrate his ability to give up the ball and sprint 40 yards back to dispossess a player and gain possession back for his team."

Bogard has maintained a weighted 4.43 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Indiana University Bloomington 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.

Bogard joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Players of the Year Chase Adams (2022-23, Naperville Central High School), Alex Barger (2021-22, Naperville North High School), Max Floriani (2020-21, Warren Township High School) and Jack Finnegan (2019-20, Brother Rice High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 organizations.

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 X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.