

EAST AURORA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Amar Culov** of **East Aurora High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Culov is the first Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from East Aurora 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 Culov as New York's 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-10, 155-pound senior forward led the Blue Devils to a 22-0-1 record and the Class B state championship this past season. Culov scored 33 goals and passed for 18 assists, setting up a score in East Aurora's 2-1 win over Spackenkill High in the state final. He scored a goal in 20 of his team's 23 games last fall. A United Soccer Coaches High School All-American selection, he concluded his prep soccer career with 55 goals and 30 assists.

The vice president of East Aurora High student government, Culov represented his school at the state-wide HOBY Youth Leadership conference. He traveled to Croatia last summer and coached a youth soccer team in addition to helping to improve soccer facilities in his host village. He has volunteered locally as part of multiple clothing and toiletry drives for the Oishei Children's Hospital in Buffalo and has also served as a peer tutor. "As soon as Amar touched the ball, I knew he was a special player unlike anyone I'd seen before," said JJ Gabor, head coach of Tonawanda High School. "He was able to utilize all of his skill sets including speed, technical ability, vision and physical strength to be a playmaker who's impossible to defend."

Culov has maintained an A average in the classroom. He will attend Vassar College, where he will attempt to walk-on to the soccer team 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.

Culov joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Players of the Year Nicolas Galeano (2022-23, Scarsdale High School), Daniel D'Ippolito (2021-22, Somers High School), Francesco Pagano (2020-21, Fayetteville-Manlius High School) and Yaya Bakayoko (2019-20, Martin Luther King 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.