

WEST CABARRUS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Drew Waller** of **West Cabarrus High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Waller is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from West Cabarrus 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 Waller as North Carolina’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 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior forward led the Wolverines (17-7-1) to the best record in program history and a berth in the 4A state tournament this past season. Waller scored 43 goals and passed for 16 assists in 25 games, averaging 1.72 goals per game. Named the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association Player of the Year, he was also named a United Soccer Coaches All-American.

A National Honor Society member, Waller has volunteered locally at middle school club day in addition to donating his time by picking up trash at the middle school and surrounding woods. He has also assisted elementary school teachers in their classrooms. “We had to constantly account for Drew on the field,” said Neil Armstrong, head coach at South Iredell High School. “He was always a threat to score and even with the extra attention from defenses, had a great senior year. He has a great sense of field awareness. He sees and attacks the seams in the defense and trusts his teammates to get him the ball in scoring positions.”

Waller has maintained a 3.83 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play soccer at the University of North Carolina.

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.

Waller joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Players of the Year Joseph Abdenour (2022-23, Cardinal Gibbons High School), Aidan Payne (2021-22, New Hanover High School), Carter Hensley (2020-21, Myers Park High School) and Landon Sloan (2019-20, Heritage 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.