

**FORT MILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 **Braden Gritz** of **Fort Mill High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Gritz is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Fort Mill 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 Gritz as South 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, 160-pound senior forward led the Yellow Jackets to a 16-8-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Gritz scored 25 goals and passed for two assists, including 11 goals and two assists in five postseason matches. A two-time Class 5A First Team All-State selection, he concluded his prep soccer career with a school-record 56 goals.

Gritz has volunteered locally for the Henry Kalungi Foundation, collecting and donating gently used clothing and soccer equipment to benefit children in East Africa. "Braden's movement off the ball is unmatched," said Stephen McKinney, head coach of Spring Valley High School. "He could redirect play to get himself into one-on-one situations consistently against good teams and he could beat anybody individually. It didn't take many touches for Braden to score."

Gritz has maintained a weighted 4.09 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the College of Charleston 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.

Gritz joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Players of the Year Duncan Wilson (2022-23, Cardinal Newman School), Fabian Menendez (2021-22, Riverside High School), Jackson Price (2020-21, A.C. Flora High School) and Ben Erkens (2019-20, Wade Hampton 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.