

**SAINT JAMES SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Katie Brightwell** of **Saint James School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Brightwell is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Saint James 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 Brightwell as Alabama’s best high school girls 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 Aly Wagner (1997-98, Presentation High School, Calif.), Mallory Swanson (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.) and Kennedy Fuller (2022-23 & 2021-22, Southlake Carroll High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-6 senior forward led the Trojans to a 17-1-1 record and the Class 1A-3A state championship this past season. Brightwell scored 71 goals and passed for 10 assists, including 12 goals in Saint James School’s four-game postseason run to the title. The 1A-3A State Final Most Valuable Player and a three-time Super All-State First Team selection, she concluded her prep soccer career with a state-record 259 goals and 84 assists.

Brightwell has volunteered locally with Dream Court Montgomery, an adaptive tennis program. An editor of her school’s digital paper, she has also donated her time as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church. “Katie is one of the best high school players that I’ve ever seen,” said Zac Cook, head coach of Alabama Christian High School. “Her skill with the ball at her feet and her ability to create space sets her apart. I know that we specifically game-planned to prevent her from scoring and she still had multiple goals against us.”

Brightwell has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Lipscomb University (Tenn.) 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.

Brightwell joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kierson McDonald (2022-23, Oak Mountain High School), Isabel Smith (2021-22, Mountain Brook High School), Haley Duca (2020-21, Chelsea High School) and Morgan White (2019-20, Westminster School at Oak Mountain), 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.