

## TAFT SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

**CHICAGO** (June 12, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Preston Alessio** of **Taft School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Soccer Player of the Year**.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Alessio as Connecticut's best high school boys soccer player, and he joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School, M.D.) and Ransford Gyan (2022-23 & 2023-24, St. Benedict's Preparatory School, N.J.).

The 5-foot-8, 165-pound senior midfielder and forward led the Rhinos to a 17-3-1 record and the program's first NEPSAC Class A state championship this past season. Alessio scored 16 goals and passed for 14 assists, netting the game-winning goal as Taft beat Milton Academy, 2-1, in the state title game. The NEPSAC Class A and New England Soccer Journal Prep Player of the Year, he was also a 2024 United Soccer Coaches All-American selection.

Alessio has volunteered locally with Community Dining Room, an organization that focuses on providing food and support to people in need. He has also donated his time with the Boys and Girls Club as an assistant counselor, helping organize and play games with young people in his community. "Preston was able to prove his worth as a top player in Connecticut, not only his individual abilities, but his ability to make players around him better," said Scott Halpern, head coach of Loomis Chaffee High School. "Individually he can affect the game in so many different ways. His one-on-one game, his combination play or his IQ and off-ball movement allow him to get into overload situations that have led to so many points. But what makes him stand out is the way he makes his whole team better. He does all the dirty work as well defending both sides of the ball, running off the ball and was a great leader for a team that won the NEPSAC Class A championship."

Alessio has maintained a 95.2 average in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer at the University of Connecticut this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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.

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 \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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](https://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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