

**NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 8, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Andrew Valverde of North High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Valverde is the first Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from North High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Valverde as California's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Valverde joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-05, Blue Valley West High School, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire High School, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.).

The 5-foot-8, 160-pound senior midfielder led the Saxons to a 23-4 record and the Southern Section, Division 3 Tournament title championship this past season. Valverde tallied 29 goals and 12 assists, including one of each in North High School's 3-2 win over Redlands East Valley High in the sectional final. The Southern Section Division 3 Player of the Year, he concluded his prep soccer career with 65 goals and 24 assists.

The president of the North High School student body, Valverde is a member of his school's Hispanic Culture Club. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach. "Andrew is among the handful of the best I have seen in my 15 years of coaching high school in California," said Chad Lagerway, head coach of South Torrance High. "Special players make a difference when it's needed, and he was exactly that, always coming through for them."

Valverde has maintained a weighted 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Valverde joins recent Gatorade California Boys Soccer Players of the Year Blake Bowen (2018-19, San Clemente High School), Tristan Weber (2017-18, San Clemente High School), Rodney Michael (2016-17, Dunn School), Elliot Smith-Hastie (2015-16, Loyola High School), Corban Anderson (2014-15, Granite Bay High School), and Abu Danladi (2013-14, Dunn School) among the state's list of former award winners.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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