

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June, 23, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Tatum Thomason** of **Liberty High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Thomason is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Liberty 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 Thomason as Arizona's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Thomason 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-5 senior forward and midfielder scored 39 goals and passed for 20 assists this past season, leading the Lions (17-6) to the Conference 6A state semifinals. The 6A State Player of the Year, Thomason recorded 13 multi-goal games including six hat tricks. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she concluded her two-year prep soccer career with 54 goals and 36 assists.

A member of the leadership team of her local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Thomason has volunteered locally for eight years at a Christmas party for homeless and struggling students at a Phoenix-area elementary school. She has also donated her time as a peer math tutor and as a youth soccer coach. "Tatum is the most dynamic player I have ever had the opportunity to coach," said Kyle Pooler, head coach of Liberty High. "She makes everyone on the field a better player. Her drive to be the best not only on the field but off is something that doesn't come around very often."

Thomason has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Thomason joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Players of the Year Maggie Cagle (2020-21, Arcadia High School), Isabella Struckman (2019-20, Chaparral High School), Keeley Bond (2018-19, Chaparral High School), and Kyla Ferry (2017-18, Xavier College Preparatory), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Thomason has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Thomason is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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