

**MINOT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 **MaLiah Burke** of **Minot High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Burke is the third Gatorade North Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Minot 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 Burke as North Dakota'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, Burke 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-7 senior forward and midfielder scored 21 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Majettes (17-0) to their second consecutive state championship. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Burke is a two-time First Team All-State honoree. She is also North Dakota's Senior Girls Soccer Athlete of the Year.

Burke was a member of her school's Student Council and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Humane Society, a soup kitchen and youth sports programs. "MaLiah Burke has a creative view of the soccer field, and the ball skill and touch to affect and change a game whenever she's on the field," said Justin Graham, head coach at Williston High School. "She's been a strong player for Minot at both the club and high school levels."

Burke has maintained a weighted 4.19 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Mary 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.

Two-time winner Burke joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Elle Hill (2019-20, Bismarck High School), and Allison Lepp (2018-19 & 2017-18, Minot High School), 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, Burke 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. Burke 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, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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