

**LEWIS & CLARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 11, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Thomas Vlasak of Lewis & Clark High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Vlasak is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Lewis & Clark 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 Vlasak as Washington'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, Vlasak 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-10, 140-pound senior defender led the Tigers to an 11-0 record this past season. Vlasak anchored a defense that allowed just five goals and posted six shutouts. He also recorded a goal and an assist. The 2021 Greater Spokane League Defensive Player of the Year, he helped spark the Tigers to two GSL league titles and a 35-9-4 record during his prep soccer career.

Vlasak has volunteered locally with the Spokane Riverkeepers, an advocacy organization for the Spokane River watershed, and as a youth soccer coach. "Thomas was a great player for Lewis & Clark," said Mo Hartanov, head coach of Mount Spokane High. "He was the best center back and his range of passing, vision and composure on the ball and under pressure really made him special."

Vlasak has maintained a weighted 4.23 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Montana State University 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Vlasak joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Players of the Year Logan Oyama (2019-20 & 2018-19, Puyallup High School), Michael Rojas (2017-18, Royal High School), and Matt Williams (2016-17, Archbishop Murphy High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Vlasak has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Vlasak is also eligible to submit a 30-second 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 \$2.7 million across 1,117 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, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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