

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)**

## **RIVER BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 10, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Marcelo Malpartida of River Bluff High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Malpartida is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from River Bluff 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 Malpartida as South Carolina'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 May, Malpartida joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7, 145-pound junior midfielder led the Gators to a 21-1 record and a berth in the quarterfinals of the ongoing Class 4A state tournament. At the time of his selection, Malpartida had passed for 16 assists. The 2016 Region 5-AAAA Most Valuable Player, Malpartida was a 2015 SCSoccer.com Super XXII selection, and he has been invited to train with the Peruvian Under-20 Men's National Team.

Malpartida has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally with the Leisure Center in Lexington to help distribute bottled water to victims of the 2015 flood and as a youth soccer coach. He has also travelled to Peru to donate soccer gear collected via his high school and club soccer teams.

"Marcelo plays with a calmness about him," said Ryan Rood, head coach of North Augusta High. "He is very soccer-minded, knows where to be and where to play at the right time. I would definitely call him a game-changer."

Malpartida has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the College of Charleston beginning in the fall of 2017.

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Malpartida joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Players of the Year Michele Bottari (2014-15, J.L. Mann Academy), Tyler Rider (2013-14, J.L. Mann Academy), Koty Millard (2012-13, Cardinal Newman School), Nestor Jaramillo (2011-12, Cardinal Newman High School), Robert Beebe (2010-11, Pinewood Preparatory School), Emmett Lunceford (2009-10, Irmo High School), and Enzo Martinez (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Northwestern High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###