

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Cleveland State's Thomas M'Barek Wins 2020-21 Senior CLASS Award for Men's Soccer

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (May 12, 2021) - Cleveland State University defender Thomas M'Barek has been selected as the 2020-21 Senior CLASS Award® winner in NCAA® Division I men's soccer.

The award, chosen by a vote of Division I men's soccer coaches, national soccer media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I men's soccer. M'Barek is the first student-athlete from Cleveland State to win the Senior CLASS Award.

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*®, the Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities. To be eligible for the award, a student-athlete must be classified as an NCAA Division I senior and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character, and competition.

"Cleveland State has taught me many things throughout the course of my collegiate career, such as the values of respect, hard work, leadership, and the importance of serving my community," said M'Barek, a three-time team captain for the Vikings. "These values have helped shape me into the person that I am today and I will certainly carry these values in each step of my life's journey. I'm incredibly lucky to call myself a Cleveland State Viking."

"Thomas is someone who truly embodies a student-athlete and has represented our program and university in the best possible way," said Sinisa Ubiparipovic, who has coached Cleveland State for the last two seasons. "His dedication in the classroom and on the field is exceptional. Thomas has set a high standard to what we expect of our student-athletes to achieve at Cleveland State."

M'Barek was born in Saint-Aunès, France, and played for the Montpellier Herault Sport Club from 2003-2017. He helped Montpellier win the 2017 Coupe de France Gambardella, the annual competition for U-19 French clubs.

M'Barek quickly made his presence known as a freshman after arriving at Cleveland State in 2017. Helping a Vikings defense that allowed only 10 goals in their final 16 games, he was named to the All-

Horizon League freshman team. M'Barek improved as a sophomore, starting all 15 games and leading Cleveland State with 1,321 minutes played. He earned an All-Horizon League second team selection for his efforts on the season. M'Barek was awarded with statewide acclaim for his play as a junior after helping the Vikings allow a league-low 17 goals in 15 games. He was selected to the All-Horizon League first team and All-Ohio first team.

During his senior year, M'Barek played in eight games for a Cleveland State team that tallied four shutouts and gave up an average of 1.06 goals per game. The Vikings captain was named to the All-Horizon League second team once more.

M'Barek, who studies international business, is extremely accomplished in the classroom. He carries a 3.97 GPA and has been selected to the All-Ohio Academic first team once, Horizon League All-Academic Team three times, and President's List five times. Since arriving in Cleveland, M'Barek has volunteered with the Adopt-a-Family drive, where he shops for clothes, toys, and other gifts with fellow student-athletes before wrapping the presents and giving them to children in need. He has participated with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, where he helps prepare and package bags and meals for the homeless and disadvantaged individuals. M'Barek also volunteers with Cleveland State's Special Olympics Day, where student-athletes play games and interact with the Special Olympians.

"Thomas M'Barek has been a model student-athlete at Cleveland State," said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. "He has earned conference accolades for his efforts during every season and continues to excel as a leader both in the classroom and in the community. We offer our congratulations to Thomas M'Barek and Cleveland State University for winning this esteemed award."

For more information on all of the finalists, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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2020-21 Senior CLASS Award Men's Soccer First Team All-Americans

Jacob Graiber, UIC

Thomas M'Barek, Cleveland State

George Proctor, Georgia State

Tor Saunders, Coastal Carolina

Marc Ybarra, Michigan

2020-21 Senior CLASS Award Men's Soccer Second Team All-Americans

Justin Malou, Clemson

Jacob Montes, Georgetown

Yannik Oettl, UCF

Chris Sullivan, Bowling Green State

Joel Walker, Oregon State

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ABOUT THE AWARD

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Senior CLASS Award honors the attributes of senior student-athletes in four areas: community, classroom, character and competition. The award program is designed exclusively for college seniors who are utilizing their complete athletic eligibility, remaining committed to their university and pursuing the many rewards a senior season can bring. Premier Sports Management manages the award.

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