

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



# UIC's Lena Kurz Wins 2020-21 Senior CLASS Award for Women's Soccer

**OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (May 12, 2021)** - University of Illinois at Chicago's goalkeeper Lena Kurz has been selected as the 2020-21 Senior CLASS Award® winner in NCAA® Division I women's soccer.

The award, chosen by a vote of Division I women's soccer coaches, national soccer media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I women's soccer.

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.

"It was a huge honor to be considered as a candidate for the Senior CLASS Award along with the other great student-athletes," said Kurz, who is the first student-athlete from the University of Illinois at Chicago to win the Senior CLASS Award. "It makes me extremely proud to represent what this award stands for as an international student-athlete. Coming to America and playing at UIC is an experience I will never forget. I'm happy that I got out of my comfort zone and took this opportunity. This program helped me to grow as a person on and off the field. Taking responsibility and a leadership role on the team is one of the many skills that I have improved over the past two years, and it will be so valuable for my future."

"Lena is a winner on the field and in the classroom," said Dustin Downey, the interim head coach of the Flames for 2020-21. "She is a true ambassador to the university across the city, country, and even internationally. She embodies what it means to be a Flame and has demonstrated the influence a student-athlete can have on the world. I expect Lena to not only continue to garner awards and accolades on the pitch, but to someday achieve greatness in society. Lena has a passion to work with youth in her future endeavors and I can't help but think how lucky all of those kids will be to have someone like Lena impact their lives. People like Lena are going to make the world a better place by changing the lives of children one day at a time."

Born in Ludwigshafen, Germany, Kurz attended the Max-Planck Gymnasium. She played for club teams 1.FFC Ludwigshafen, 1.FFC Niederkirchen, and TSV Neckarau and won a local cup.

Kurz quickly established her dominance during her first season on campus, leading the Flames to an 11-5-1 record. She was named the 2019 Horizon League Goalkeeper of the Year after playing in 16 games and recording 11 total shutouts. Kurz led the conference in shutouts and ranked second in both save percentage and goals-against average. She also finished near the top of the leaderboards nationally, ranking 12th in save percentage, 13th in shutouts, and 16th in goals-against average. For her extraordinary efforts on the season, Kurz set single-season program records with her win total, shutouts, save percentage, and goals-against average.

Kurz, the program leader in save percentage and goals-against average, started all nine games this season for a 5-3-1 record. She recorded a 0.78 save percentage, 0.98 goals-against average, three shutouts, and tallied 32 saves in 830 minutes played. Kurz, who holds the school record with 14 shutouts, helped the Flames qualify for a consecutive conference tournament appearance for the first time in program history.

Kurz shines in the classroom, as well. In only three semesters of graduate school, she earned her master's degree in education while carrying a perfect 4.0 GPA. She was selected to the 2020 Horizon League All-Academic Team for her diligence. Since arriving in Chicago in 2019, Kurz has actively participated with the program's Urban Initiatives. They provide education and summer camp opportunities for youths to build skills, experience leadership, understand the importance of athletics, and participate in community service. She has also contributed to the team's community cleanup program, helping remove trash from Chicago's streets.

"Lena Kurz has embodied all that the Senior CLASS Award represents while at the University of Illinois at Chicago," said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. "She has made an enormous impact in the classroom, in the community, and on the field since arriving on campus. We would like to offer our congratulations to Lena Kurz and the University of Illinois at Chicago."

For more information on all of the finalists, visit [seniorCLASSaward.com](http://seniorCLASSaward.com).

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## **2020-21 Senior CLASS Award Women's Soccer First Team All-Americans**

**Amirah Ali**, Rutgers

**Sam Coffey**, Penn State

**Lena Kurz**, UIC

**Lucy Porter**, Hofstra

**Delanie Sheehan**, UCLA

## **2020-21 Senior CLASS Award Women's Soccer Second Team All-Americans**

**Kerry Abello**, Penn State

**Jordyn Bloomer**, Wisconsin

**Kirsten Davis**, Texas Tech

**Brookelynn Entz**, Kansas State

**Sabrina Wagner**, South Florida

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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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