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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GUARDIAN ATHLETICS NAMED FINALIST IN MN CUP COMPETITION**

MANKATO, Minnesota (August 22, 2019) – Guardian Athletics has been named as a finalist for MN Cup 2019. MN Cup, a program of the Holmes Center for Entrepreneurs at the Carlson School of Management, is a community-led, public-private partnership that brings together corporations, VCs, foundations, government, and skilled volunteers to support Minnesota's entrepreneurs.

Every year since 2005, MN Cup has worked with hundreds of experienced entrepreneur and advisor volunteers to connect participants to mentoring, and ultimately, judging each to identify a winner of a cash grand prize as well as a feature in the January Twin Cities Business supplement, Division Finalist Training such as "Winning Investment Presentations" presented by Padilla, and an opportunity to present their plan to prominent business leaders and investors.

Guardian Athletics, an innovation-driven sports equipment manufacturer, launched its hero product Kato Collar for football safety in 2018. Kato Collar is an extra measure of protection against injuries such as burners and stingers, as well as the forces and mechanisms that are believed to cause concussions. With its innovative design and technology, Kato Collar slows down a player's head by up to 30%.

In addition to the company's recent launch of an additional size collar and a new rental program that brings access to teams of all sizes, Guardian Athletics is excited about the momentum. "We've worked together with the football community to find solutions to all-too-common injuries, and are extremely excited that coaches, trainers, and players are taking notice", said Dave Norris, CEO. "The opportunity to participate in the MN Cup competition has been an incredible experience, and we are humbled to be selected as a finalist."

Since its launch during the 2018 fall football season, Kato Collar is being worn by more than 100 college and high school teams along with nine professional teams this past season and off-season. Teams have offered exceptional feedback, including comments that players didn't feel extra weight or bulk from wearing the collar, and each of them could freely move their head and neck while wearing the collar.

With additional prizes from organizations such as DEED, Carlson Family Foundation, and Securian Financial, the start-up and small-business visibility of MN Cup is a highly anticipated yearly event in Minnesota. Through this community-led generosity, MN Cup is able to offer every part of our competition and programming free of charge, and they take no equity in return for prize money. Since their founding season, over 16,000 Minnesotans have participated, they have given away \$2.9 Million in seed funds, and alumni have gone on to raise nearly \$400 Million in capital. For more information about MN Cup, please visit <https://carlsonschool.umn.edu/mn-cup>.

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### **About Guardian Athletics**

Based in Mankato, Minnesota, Guardian Athletics is an innovation-driven company built around the belief that there is a better way to approach football safety around concussions and other head and neck injuries. Founded in 2008, the company's flagship product Kato Collar with its patented deceleration design slows down the forces on a player's head after the initial impact of the hit and keeps the head from reaching those extreme points where injuries occur. For more information, visit [GuardianAthletics.com](http://GuardianAthletics.com).

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