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**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**WAUBONSIE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 13, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Vanessa DiBernardo of Waubonsie Valley High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Player of the Year. DiBernardo is the second Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Waubonsie Valley 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 DiBernardo as Illinois' best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, DiBernardo 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.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), 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-4 senior midfielder had led the Warriors (15-1-3) to the area's No. 2 ranking by the *Chicago Sun Times* at the time of her selection, recording 16 goals and six assists. A three-time National Soccer Coaches Association of America Youth All-American and a two-time NSCAA High School All-American, DiBernardo is a three-time *Sun Times* All-State selection and is rated the nation's No. 51 recruit in the Class of 2010 as rated by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She helped Waubonsie Valley to back-to-back Class 3A state titles in 2007 and 2008 and had recorded 70 goals and 41 assists in her prep career at the time of her selection.

DiBernardo has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at an elementary school and as a youth soccer coach and referee.

"Vanessa DiBernardo is a playmaker," said Frank Mateus, head coach at Loyola University Chicago. "She makes everyone around her better. She's got unreal vision and is great at setting people up. She's got eyes in the back of her head."

DiBernardo has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Illinois 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

DiBernardo joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Soccer Players of the Year Rachel Quon (2008-09, Lake Forest), Bri Rodriguez (2007-08, Waubonsie Valley), and Tessa Gavilsky (2006-07, Granite City) 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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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