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**SANDIA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Victoria Barba of Sandia High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Barba is the fourth Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Sandia 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 Barba as New Mexico's 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, Barba 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-3 junior forward recorded 21 goals and 16 assists this past season, leading the Matadors (17-3) to the Class 5A state semifinals. Also the 2008-09 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Barba was the 2008 and 2010 Class 5A Player of the Year and a 2010 All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. Through her junior year, she has recorded 71 goals and 34 assists in her prep soccer career.

Barba has maintained a 3.46 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at an area nursing home and as a youth soccer coach, and she has also donated her time serving homeless and needy families in association with her church.

"Victoria Barba is special," said Heather Dyche, the director of the U.S. Youth Soccer Girls State Olympic Development Program. "She sees the game at a different pace. She's not a dominant athlete, not a huge, physical body, but she plays in areas of the field that a lot of players don't understand. She plays against the grain. I think she sees things differently."

Barba will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Two-time winner Barba joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jenni White (2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), and Courtney Tinnin (2007-08, St. Pius X 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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