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**ATHENS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 12, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Olivia Brannon of Athens High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Brannon is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Athens 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 Brannon as Michigan'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, Brannon 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.), 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-6 senior midfielder and defender has led the Hawks to a 10-1 record entering this week's regular-season contest against Rochester Adams High, scheduled for May 12. Brannon scored eight goals and passed for six assists through 11 games. A member of the U.S. Soccer Federation Under-20 Women's National Team Player Pool, Brannon missed most of her junior year after breaking her foot. A 2010 Parade All-American and a 2010 Youth All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, she was a 2009 Michigan School Soccer Coaches Association Division 1 First Team All-State honoree.

Brannon has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a peer math and science tutor and at a homeless shelter, Brannon is a co-organizer and lead fundraiser for "Many Hearts One Goal," a foundation to benefit the Under-17 Haitian Women's National Team.

"Olivia Brannon is a freak athletically," said Paul Webster, a coach with the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Olympic Development Program. "She's very strong, powerful and agile. She's got all the physical tools. She's got that unique combination of athletic strength, speed and technical ability and she understands the game very well. That's a good package."

Brannon has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

Brannon joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Players of the Year two-time winner Annie Steinlage, (2008-09 & 2009-10, Spring Lake) and Laura Heyboer (2007-08, Unity Christian) 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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