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**HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 23, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Jaden DeGracie of Highland High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year. DeGracie is the second Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Highland 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 DeGracie as Arizona'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, DeGracie 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 junior midfielder led the Hawks to a 22-3 record and the Division I state title this past season. DeGracie scored three goals and passed for 41 assists, including five assists in Highland's four-game run in the state tournament. The Division I, Section 2 Player of the Year and an Arizona Republic All-Arizona First Team selection, DeGracie concluded her junior year with five goals and 56 assists in her prep career.

DeGracie has maintained a 4.36 weighted GPA in the classroom. The vice president and treasurer of the Highland High student council, she was the co-founder of J&J Pianist, which performs recitals at retirement homes, and has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics, a local literacy-outreach program and as a youth soccer coach.

"If I could put any kid in the state on my team it would be Jaden DeGracie," said Matt Smith, head coach of rival Corona del Sol High. "She is the Energizer Bunny out there. She goes hard if they are winning, harder if they are losing. I have focused on her every time I have played them for the last three years."

DeGracie 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 ESPNHS 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.

DeGracie joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Players of the Year Rylie Johnson (2010 - 11, Hamilton High School), Hilary Zenuk, (2009-10, Highland), Jessica Petznick (2008-09 Xavier College Prep.), and Brittany Cole (2006-07 & 2007-08, Corona del Sol), 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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