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**BISHOP O'DOWD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 23, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Ryan Walker-Hartshorn of Bishop O'Dowd High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Walker-Hartshorn is the first Gatorade California Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop O'Dowd 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 Walker-Hartshorn as California'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, Walker-Hartshorn 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-11 junior forward led the Dragons to a 21-3-2 record and the CIF-North Central Section Division II tournament championship this past season. Walker-Hartshorn scored 22 goals and passed for 14 assists, including six goals and three assists in Bishop O'Dowd's four-game postseason run. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team, for which she plays outside back, Walker-Hartshorn was the 2012 All-East Bay Girls Soccer Player of the Year. She concluded her junior year with 61 goals and 29 assists in her prep career.

Walker-Hartshorn has maintained a 3.35 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and tutor, at a homeless shelter and at a child care center.

"What makes Ryan Walker-Hartshorn such a good player is her intensity and drive," said Roger Casci, head coach of rival Arroyo High. "She has all the qualities you want for a player: size, strength, speed and vision, but it's her drive that makes her hard to defend."

Walker-Hartshorn has verbally committed to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Stanford University beginning in the fall of 2013.

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.

Walker-Hartshorn joins recent Gatorade California Girls Soccer Players of the Year Lauren Bohaboy (2010 - 11, Santa Margarita Catholic High School), Abby Dahlkemper, (2009-10, Sacred Heart Prep.), Lauren Matheson (2008-09 Mission Viejo), Teresa Noyola (2007-08, Palo Alto), and Lauren Barnes (2006-07, Upland) 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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