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**HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Stephanie DeVita of Hillcrest High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year. DeVita is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Hillcrest 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 DeVita as South Carolina'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, DeVita 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 two-time returning Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7 senior midfielder recorded 44 goals and nine assists this past season, leading the Rams (16-9) to the Class 4A state quarterfinals. A two-time Class 4A First Team All-State selection, she recorded eight hat tricks and 14 multi-goal games as a senior. She concluded her prep soccer career with a school-record 105 goals as well as 29 assists.

DeVita has maintained a 4.30 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of her local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, she has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach.

"Stephanie DeVita is an extremely strong player and a huge threat with and without the ball," said Scott Taylor, head coach of rival Dorman High. "While dribbling the ball she was still faster than my entire team. She can shoot from anywhere with anyone on her, dribble with intense speed and make smart and productive runs off the ball."

DeVita has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Furman University 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.

Three-time winner DeVita (2009-10 & 2010 - 11, Hillcrest High School) joins Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sarah Schaidle (2008-09 Mauldin), and Kira Campbell (2006-07 & 2007-08, Lexington 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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