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**Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)**

**KINGSWOOD OXFORD SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE CONNECTICUT GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 9, 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 Paula Hagopian of Kingswood Oxford School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Hagopian is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Kingswood Oxford 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 Hagopian as Connecticut'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, Hagopian 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-4 senior forward scored 13 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Wyverns to a 5-7-2 record. Also the 2011 Connecticut Soccer Coaches Association Player of the Year and a two-time All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Hagopian led Kingswood Oxford to the 2010 New England Prep School Athletic Council Class B championship. She concluded her prep soccer career with 56 goals and 35 assists.

Hagopian has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. The first chair clarinet player in the Kingswood Oxford school band, she has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and at an area homeless shelter and food bank.

"Paula is so strong that defenders bounce off her," said Matt Micros, a club coach with Connecticut FC. "She can hold the ball up well and also spin defenders with ease. What she lacks in technique she more than make up for with power and pace."

Hagopian will attend Yale University where she will play soccer beginning 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.

Hagopian joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Players of the Year Riley Houle (2010-11, Windham High School), Kate McCarthy, (2009-10, The Loomis Chaffee School), Jessica Schloth (2008-09, St. Joseph High School), Alex Uscilla (2007-08, St. Joseph High School), and Bianca D'Agostino (2006-07, Loomis Chaffee 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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