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**CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 9, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Brooke Backes of Carmel High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Backes is the second Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Carmel 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 Backes as Indiana'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, Backes 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 forward led the Greyhounds to a 22-0-1 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Backes scored 16 goals and passed for nine assists, scoring the lone goal in Carmel's 1-0 state title-clinching win over Hamilton Southeastern High. The 2011 Indiana Soccer Coaches Association's Miss Soccer, Backes is a two-time Indianapolis Star Player of the Year and an All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. She concluded her prep soccer career with 42 goals and 26 assists.

Backes has maintained a 3.85 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at an area homeless shelter and food bank, on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"Brooke Backes is extremely dangerous, fast and deadly inside the 18-yard box," said Ramon Aguillon, head coach of Zionsville High. "She is a tremendous player."

Backes has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Iowa 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.

Backes joins recent Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sarah Killion (2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, Bishop Dwenger High School), Ashley Auld (2007-08, Noblesville High School), and Julie Scheidler (2006-07, Bishop Chatard) 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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