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**BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MONTANA 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 Savannah Witt of Billings West High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Montana Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Witt is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Billings West 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 Witt as Montana'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, Witt 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-5 senior midfielder and forward scored 12 goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Bears (4-4-5) to the Class AA sectional tournament. The 2011 Class AA Eastern Division Player of the Year, Witt is a two-time Great Falls Tribune Super-State Team selection and a three-time Class AA First Team Eastern Division honoree. She concluded her prep soccer career with 42 goals and 24 assists.

Witt has maintained a 3.62 GPA in the classroom. Named to the Billings Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership program as a junior, she has volunteered locally as a youth mentor at her church.

"Savannah Witt is a complete player with speed, great technical ability and she has a great head for the game," said Erika Cannon, Bozeman High head coach. "She is dangerous in so many ways; if she doesn't score on you, she plays the final pass to the player that will."

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

Witt joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jackie Elliott (2010-11, Billings Central Catholic High School), Tess Hagenlock, (2009-10, Bozeman), Lauren Hickok (2008-09, Bozeman High School), Meghan O'Connell (2007-08, Flathead High School), and Kirsten Tilleman (2006-07, Bozeman) 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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