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**STRONGSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 Ashley Meier of Strongsville High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Meier is the first Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Strongsville 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 Meier as Ohio'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, Meier 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-10 senior midfielder and forward led the Mustangs to a 21-2 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Meier scored 17 goals and passed for 13 assists. The 2011 National Soccer Coaches Association of America National High School Player of the Year, Meier was the Ohio Soccer Coaches Association's Miss Soccer. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team, she concluded her prep career with 58 goals and 36 assists.

Meier has maintained a 3.49 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of her area's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, she has volunteered locally as a teacher's aide, a youth soccer coach and on behalf of the Special Olympics.

"Ashley Meier is a game-changer," said Doug Coreno, Medina High head coach. "Every coach in the area game-planned for Ashley when they played Strongsville, but no one could slow her down."

Meier has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Virginia Tech 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.

Meier joins recent Gatorade Ohio Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sandra Yu (2010-11, Walsh Jesuit High School), Elizabeth Burchenal, (2009-10 & 2008-09, St. Ursula Academy), Tahnai Annis (2007-08, Pickerington High School North), and Rose Augustin (2006-07, Walsh Jesuit) 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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