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**LA SALLE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 McKenzie Meehan of La Salle Academy as its 2011-12 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Meehan is the fifth Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Meehan as Rhode Island'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, Meehan 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 forward led the Rams to a 20-0-2 record and the Division 1 state championship this past season. Meehan scored 80 goals and passed for 14 assists, including two goals and two assists in a 6-2 win over Smithfield High in the state final. The returning Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Meehan is a two-time All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. She recorded 16 hat tricks in 22 games with six four-goal games, four five-goal games and three six-goal games, concluding her prep soccer career with 181 goals and 41 assists.

Meehan has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of La Salle's Pegasus Gifted Student Program, she has volunteered locally as a peer Spanish tutor and a youth soccer coach.

"McKenzie Meehan should be on the national team," said Keith Caldwell, Meehan's coach with the Scorpions SC club team. "She's the best goal-scorer I've ever seen. She is strong, athletic, tough and she holds the ball well. She's not flashy. She just scores goals."

Meehan has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Boston College 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.

Meehan joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Soccer Players of the Year Allison Kelley, (2009-10 & 2008-09, La Salle Academy), Katie Reilly (2007-08, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Erica Florenz (2006-2007, Scituate) 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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