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**ALTA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE UTAH 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 Michele Murphy of Alta High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Utah Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Murphy is the third Gatorade Utah Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Alta 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 Murphy as Utah'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, Murphy 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 led the Hawks to a 19-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Murphy scored 37 goals and passed for 22 assists, including seven goals and four assists in four postseason games. The 2011 Deseret News' Miss Soccer and the 2011 Salt Lake Tribune Class 5A Player of the Year, Murphy scored the lone goal in Alta's 1-0 win over Viewmont High in the state final. She concluded her prep career with 49 goals and 39 assists.

Murphy has maintained a 3.84 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at Primary Children's Medical Center, on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit diabetes research and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"Michele Murphy was a dominating force that my team personally had no answer for," said Brady Smith, West High head coach. "She had the ability level to take over a game at any time and was just truly a superior athlete."

Murphy has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Brigham Young University 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.

Murphy joins recent Gatorade Utah Girls Soccer Players of the Year Stephanie Verdoia (2010-11, Brighton High School), Jaiden Thornock, (2009-10, Bonneville), Kealia Ohai (2008-09 & 2007-08, Alta), and Megan Ohai (2006-07, Alta) 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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