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**COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Lauren Bernard of Colchester High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Bernard is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Colchester 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 Bernard as Vermont'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, Bernard 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-3 senior forward/midfielder scored 24 goals and passed for five assists this past season, leading the Lakers (7-6-2) to the Div. I state quarterfinals. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Bernard is a two-time All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and was chosen as Burlington Free Press Player of the Year. She is a former member of the U.S. Soccer Federation Under-15 Women's National Team, and a current member of the Under-18 National Team player pool.

Bernard has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with youth soccer programs and camps.

"She's very strong technically and her left foot is deadly," said Dwight Irish, head coach of rival Vergennes High. "If she has a little bit of room and she's anywhere near the goal, she's going to change the game."

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

Bernard joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Players of the Year Brittany Pfaff, (2009-10, Rice Memorial), Natalie LeClair (2008-09 & 2007-08, Essex High School), and Emily Milbank (2006-07, Champlain Valley Union) 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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