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**WASHINGTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 7, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Alana O'Neill of Washingtonville High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year. O'Neill is the first Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Washingtonville 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 O'Neill as New York'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, O'Neill 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-8 junior defender scored 12 goals and passed for five assists this past season, leading the Wizards (20-0) to the Class AA state championship. O'Neill anchored a defense that allowed just eight goals and notched 13 shutouts. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and the Class AA co-Player of the Year, she scored five of her goals in the postseason, including the only tally of the state final.

O'Neill has maintained an A average in the classroom. Also a talented musician, she has volunteered on behalf of a local food pantry and has served as a mentor for students with developmental disabilities.

"She's a threat from anywhere on the field, and as a defender she can just shut down an opponent," said Dave Doulin, head coach at Newburgh Free Academy. "It's virtually impossible to prepare against her."

O'Neill will begin her senior year of high school 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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

O'Neill joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Players of the Year Cari Roccaro (2011-12, East Islip High School), Tatiana Saunders (2010 - 11, Rye High School), Crystal Dunn, (2009-10, South Side), Kim DeCesare (2008-09, Massapequa High School), Alaina Beyar (2007-08, South Side High School), and Hannah Cerrone (2006-2007, Ketcham) 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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