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**HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 21, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jaden DeGracie of Highland High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year. DeGracie is the second Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Highland 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 DeGracie as Arizona'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, DeGracie 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-5 senior midfielder scored eight goals and passed for 47 assists this past season, leading the Hawks (21-3-2) to the Division I state semifinals. DeGracie is a two-time First Team All-State selection and was a 2012 All-Region VIII honoree by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. She concluded her prep soccer career with 13 goals and 101 assists.

DeGracie has maintained a 4.36 weighted GPA in the classroom. A long-time piano player, she is the co-founder of J&J Pianist, which performs goodwill recitals at area retirement homes. She has also volunteered locally as part of a literacy-outreach initiative, as a youth soccer coach and on behalf of the U.S. Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program for athletes with physical or intellectual challenges.

"Jaden DeGracie's [flip] throw-in is so dangerous that we didn't have an answer for it," said Greg Johnson, head coach of Basha High. "Besides that weapon, she is very dangerous in the midfield and has deceptive speed that she utilizes to make penetrating runs toward the 18 to set up her shot."

DeGracie has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arizona 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.

Two-time winner DeGracie joins Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Players of the Year Rylie Johnson (2010 - 11, Hamilton High School), Hilary Zenuk (2009-10, Highland), Jessica Petznick (2008-09 Xavier College Prep.), and Brittany Cole (2007-08 & 2006-2007, Corona del Sol), 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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