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**AVON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 6, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Cassidy Blacha of Avon High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Blacha is the first Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Avon 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 Blacha as Indiana'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, Blacha 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-7 junior midfielder led the Tigers to an 18-2-3 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Blacha scored 20 goals and passed for 10 assists, and she tallied in overtime to deliver Avon the title in the state final. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, she was an Indiana Soccer Coaches Association First Team All-State honoree and concluded her junior year with career totals of 32 goals and 23 assists.

Blacha has maintained a 3.39 GPA in the classroom. A teaching assistant at Avon High, she has volunteered locally as a freshman mentor and as a youth soccer coach.

"Avon does not get to, or win, the state championship without Cassidy," said Phil Slavens, head coach of Brownsburg High. "She makes everything go for them."

Blacha has made a verbal commitment to attend Indiana University beginning in the fall of 2015.

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.

Blacha joins recent Gatorade Indiana Girls Soccer Players of the Year Gracie Lachowecki (2012-13, Reitz Memorial Catholic High School), Brooke Backes (2011-12, Carmel High School), Sarah Killion (2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, Bishop Dwenger High School), Ashley Auld (2007-08, Noblesville High School), and Julie Scheidler (2006-07, Bishop Chatard) 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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