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**JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE IOWA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 13, 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 Sam Graving of Johnston High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Graving is the first Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Johnston 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 Graving as Iowa's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Graving 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 6-foot-1, 170-pound senior forward and midfielder has led the Dragons to a 14-0 record entering this week's regular-season game against Fort Dodge High, scheduled for May 13. Graving has scored eight goals and passed for six assists through 14 games. A member of the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Olympic Development Program player pool, he was a 2013 Class 3A First team All-State selection after helping Johnston reach the state semifinals.

Graving has maintained a weighted 3.57 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a child-care provider at his church and as a youth soccer coach and referee.

"Sam is a worker and is always looking for the ball," said Aaron Ruff, head coach of Ankeny Centennial High. "He is technically gifted as well as a great athlete. I feel that our attention to Graving exposed us in other areas where Johnston took advantage."

Graving has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Drake University 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.

Graving joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Players of the Year Mueng Sunday (2012-13, Iowa City West High School), Eric Williams (2011-12, Valley High School), Gabe Christianson (2010 - 11, Kennedy High School), Erik Boyer (2009-10, Kennedy), Husref Jupic (2008-09 Hoover High School), Hunter Kennedy (2007-08, Washington), and Charlie Schwartz (2006-2007, Bettendorf) 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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