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**NORTHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MICHIGAN GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 20, 2014) — In its 29<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 Megan Buckingham of Northville High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Buckingham is the third Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Northville 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 Buckingham as Michigan'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, Buckingham 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-5 senior midfielder and forward led the Mustangs to a 14-0 record entering the Kensington Conference Championship game against Livonia Churchill High, scheduled for May 19. Buckingham scored 12 goals and passed for 13 assists through 14 games. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team and a club Youth All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, she is ranked as the nation's No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2014 by TopDrawerSoccer.com.

Buckingham has maintained a 3.61 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank and as a youth soccer coach in addition to completing a service-mission trip to Costa Rica.

"Megan Buckingham is by far the best and most complete player I've seen this year, bar none, and maybe ever," said Jeff Neschich, head coach of Plymouth High.

Buckingham has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Buckingham joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Soccer Players of the Year Madi Lewis (2012-13 & 2011-12, Plymouth High School), Olivia Brannon (2010 - 11, Athens High School), Annie Steinlage (2009-10 & 2008-09, Spring Lake), and Laura Heyboer (2007-08 & 2006-2007, Unity Christian), 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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