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**J.L. MANN ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 20, 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 Jeni Erickson of J.L. Mann Academy as its 2013-14 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Erickson is the second Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from J.L. Mann Academy.

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 Erickson as South Carolina'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, Erickson 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 senior midfielder led the Patriots to a 24-0 record and a berth in the Class 4A State Tournament semifinals against Dorman High, scheduled for May 19. Erickson scored 29 goals and passed for 10 assists through 24 games. A 2013 All-Region selection, she entered the postseason final four with 73 goals and 33 assists in her prep soccer career.

Erickson has maintained a weighted 4.54 GPA in the classroom. The vice president of the J.L. Mann senior class, she has volunteered locally as a youth swim and soccer coach in addition to serving as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group.

"I have watched Jeni play for four years and she gets better every time I see her," said Elizabeth Williams, head coach of St. Joseph High. "She is extremely dynamic and dangerous with that left foot. She knows exactly where to be at the perfect time."

Erickson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Clemson 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.

Erickson joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Girls Soccer Players of the Year Chelsea Drennan (2012-13, T.L. Hanna High School), Stephanie DeVita (2011-12, 2010 - 11 & 2009-10, Hillcrest High School), Sarah Schaidle (2008-09, Mauldin), and Kira Campbell (2007-08 & 2006-2007, Lexington), 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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