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ORONO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 5, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sophie Babo of Orono High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Babo is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Orono 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 Babo as Minnesota'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, Babo 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-10 senior forward and midfielder led the Spartans to a 19-2-1 record and the Class A state championship this past season. Babo scored 32 goals and passed for 12 assists before breaking her left leg early in Orono's 1-0 shootout victory over Washburn High in the state final. Also the Minnesota State High School Soccer Coaches Association Class A Miss Soccer in 2014, Babo was a four-time Minneapolis Star Tribune First Team All-Metro selection and a four-time Wright County Conference MVP. She concluded her five-year prep soccer career with 150 goals and 56 assists.

Babo has maintained a 4.25 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a middle school mentor and tutor and as a youth soccer coach. Babo has also donated her time to Operation Christmas Child and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"Sophie is the standard that all the other girls would like to reach," said Brad Hak, head coach of Dover-Eyota High. "She has the body size and the quickness that will make her dangerous at the next level. We played no one else this season who stood out like she did."

Babo has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky beginning 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.

Babo joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Elizabeth Endy (2013-14, Minnetonka High School), Jenna Roering (2012-13 & 2011-12, Centennial High School), Taylor Uhl (2010-11, Eden Prairie High School), Kassey Kallman, (2009-10, Woodbury), Catie Sessions (2008-09, Woodbury High School), Krista Lundgren (2007-08, Lakeville South High School), and Angie Olson (2006-07, Eagan) 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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