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## **NORTHERN HIGHLANDS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE NEW JERSEY GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 5, 2015) — In its 30<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 Hana Kerner of Northern Highlands Regional High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Kerner is the second Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Northern Highlands Regional 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 Kerner as New Jersey'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, Kerner 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-6 senior forward led the Highlanders to a 22-1 record and a fourth straight Group 3 state championship this past season. Kerner scored 21 goals and passed for three assists, picking up a hat trick in Northern Highland's 4-0 win over Colts Neck High in the state final. It was her second three-goal performance in a state title game, matching the feat she pulled off as a sophomore in 2012. Also the NJ.com Player of the Year, Kerner missed three games during the regular season when she was invited to train with the U.S. Soccer Under-20 Women's National Team. Ranked as the No. 29 recruit in the Class of 2015 by TopDrawerSoccer.com, she concluded her prep soccer career with 59 goals, four state titles and a 92-1-1 record.

Kerner has maintained a 4.14 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the Northern Highlands High Stock Market Club, she has volunteered locally as an elementary school tutor and as a youth soccer coach.

"Hana's impact on the field for Highlands was probably felt most in the biggest games," said Paul Heenehan, head coach of Ramapo High. "The hat trick in the state final this year is a great example. Her individual stats might not be that impressive but her team stats were amazing and she set the tone."

Kerner has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

Kerner joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Soccer Players of the Year Caroline Chagares (2013-14 & 2011-12, Ramapo High School), Clare Shea (2012-13, Northern Highlands Regional High School), Danielle Colaprico (2010-11, Red Bank Catholic High School), Kaitlyn Kerr, (2009-10 & 2008-09, The Pennington School), Shannon Mayrose (2007-08, Freehold High School), and Ingrid Wells (2006-07, Montclair) 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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