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**BELLE FOURCHE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Jessica Ryan of Belle Fourche High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Ryan is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Belle Fourche 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 Ryan as South Dakota'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, Ryan 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-3 junior forward led the Broncs to an 8-3-1 record and the Class A state championship this past season. Ryan scored 24 goals and passed for five assists, including netting the game-winning goal in Belle Fourche's 2-1 victory over St. Thomas More High in the Class A state title game. A three-time First Team All-State selection, she was the 605Soccer.com Class A Player of the Year.

Ryan has maintained a 4.0 weighted GPA in the classroom. The president of her class as a freshman, sophomore and junior, she has volunteered locally as part of an anti-bullying campaign and community beautification projects. She has also donated her time at the Butte County 4-H rodeo and as a youth basketball coach.

"Jessica has a knowledge for the game unlike many others I have seen," said Adam Fitzpatrick, head coach of Sturgis Brown High. "There is an ability she has to let the game come to her and really dominate it if need be. If she needs to be a scorer, she will score. If she needs to facilitate, then she would assist."

Ryan will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Ryan joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year KJ Medler (2013-14, St. Thomas More High School) among the state's list of 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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