

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)

**MCDONOGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 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 Connor Smith of McDonogh School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Smith is the sixth Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from McDonogh 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 Smith as Maryland's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Smith 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, 145-pound senior midfielder scored 23 goals and passed for 21 assists this past season, leading the Eagles (19-1) to the Independent Athletic Association of Maryland Conference A Tournament semifinals. Selected as the National High School Player of the Year by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Smith was also named Player of the Year by the Baltimore Sun and the Maryland Association of Coaches of Soccer. He concluded his prep soccer career with 46 goals and 31 assists.

Smith has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of community-beautification projects and as a peer math tutor in addition to donating his time at a food bank and as an elementary school teacher's aide.

"What makes Connor so dangerous is that he is top quality, meaning that he finishes the chances he gets," said Mike St. Martin, head coach of Mount St. Joseph's High. "He has a great work rate and makes the other players around him better."

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

Smith joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Soccer Players of the Year George Campbell (2013-14 & 2012-13, McDonogh School), Andrew Harris (2011-12, Gilman School), Cody Albrecht (2010-11, DeMatha Catholic High School), Marquez Fernandez (2009-10 & 2008-09, McDonogh School), Chris Agorsor (2007-08, McDonogh School), and B.J. Quigley (2006-07, Archbishop Curley) 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.

###