

**Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)**

**BOZEMAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MONTANA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 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 Ben Hietala of Bozeman High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Hietala is the second Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Bozeman 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 Hietala as Montana'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, Hietala 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-11, 165-pound senior forward led the Hawks to a 12-1-2 record and a third straight Class AA state championship this past season. Hietala scored 26 goals and passed for eight assists, including five goals and two assists in Bozeman's three-game postseason run to the title. A two-time Montana Coaches Association First Team All-State selection, Hietala is also a two-time Great Falls Tribune Super State honoree. He concluded his prep soccer career with 47 goals and 22 assists.

Hietala has maintained a 4.18 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Society of High School Scholars, he has volunteered locally as a teaching assistant at Bozeman High and has also donated his time to an anti-bullying leadership group.

"Ben Hietala is one of the better strikers in our conference with his ability to adjust his play style in-game to account for any changes made by the defense," said Joel Marinaccio, head coach of C.M. Russell High. "He was a big-time leader on that team."

Hietala has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at High Point University in North Carolina 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.

Hietala joins recent Gatorade Montana Boys Soccer Players of the Year Alec Marshall (2013-14, Bozeman High School), Nick Downs (2012-13 & 2011-12, CM Russell High School), Anthony Keene (2010-11, Billings West High School), Zach Moyers (2009-10, Billings West High School), Jack Pueringer (2008-09, Billings West High School), Garion Holian (2007-08, Hellgate High School), and Adam Clinch (2006-07, Capital High School) 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).

###