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## **GRAYSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 19, 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 Ella Stevens of Grayson High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Stevens is the second Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Grayson 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 Stevens as Georgia'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, Stevens 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-8 junior midfielder had led the Rams to a 19-3 record and a berth in the Class AAAAAA state final at the time of her selection. Stevens scored 19 goals and passed for 26 assists through 22 games. A two-time All-Region 8 selection, Stevens is rated as the No. 7 recruit in the nation for the Class of 2016 by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She concluded her junior year with 48 goals and 72 assists in her prep soccer career.

Stevens has maintained a weighted 3.59 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with multiple community-service initiatives as part of her church youth group.

"Ella Stevens, what a player," said Mike Yocca, head coach of Central Gwinnett High. "She makes everyone around her better. She's very unselfish and distributes the most beautiful balls to her teammates."

Stevens has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Duke University beginning in the fall of 2016.

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.

Stevens joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jennifer Westendorf (2013-14, Grayson High School), Rachel Garcia (2012-13, Greater Atlanta Christian School), Emily Sonnett (2011-12, Fellowship Christian School), Morgan Brian (2010-11 & 2009-10, Frederica Academy), Laura Eddy (2008-09, Marist School), Ashley Baker (2007-08, Parkview High School), and Marah Falle (2006-07, Parkview 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).

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