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 Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

duPont Manual High School STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE Kentucky GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

**CHICAGO** (February 4, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced **Emina Ekic of duPont Manual High School** as its **2015-16 Gatorade Kentucky Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Ekic is the first Gatorade Kentucky Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from duPont Manual 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 Ekic as Kentucky’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, Ekic 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-4 junior midfielder and forward scored 23 goals and passed for 15 assists this past season, leading the Rams (15-5) to the 7th Region semifinals. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-17 Women’s National Team, Ekic missed four games for duPont while she attended national team camps. Also an All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Ekic is rated as the No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2017 by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She concluded her junior year with 64 goals and 28 assists in her prep soccer career.

Ekic has maintained a weighted 3.38 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group.

“Emina Ekic was by far that most dangerous player on the field,” said Mariah Gratzy, head coach of Mercy Academy. “She has an uncanny ability to find the back of the net. And her vision on the field and creativity on the ball are unmatched in the state of Kentucky.”

Ekic has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Louisville beginning in the fall of 2017.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](http://www.gatorade.com/poy/overview.aspx) 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](http://www.usatodayhss.com/customize), 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.

Ekic joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Girls Soccer Players of the Year Stephanie Rowland (2014-15, South Oldham High School), Mallory Eubanks (2013-14, Tates Creek High School), Libby Leedom (2012-13 & 2011-12, St. Henry District High School), Arin Gilliland (2010–11, West Jessamine High School), Jackie Hafele (2009-10, Sacred Heart Academy), Nikki Hafele (2008–09, Sacred Heart Academy), Jenna Goblirsch (2007-08, Elizabethtown High School), and Sydney Hiance (2006-07, Highlands 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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