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Mount Desert Island High School STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE Maine 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 **Opal Curless of Mount Desert Island High School** as its **2015-16 Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Curless is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Desert Island 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 Curless as Maine’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, Curless 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 senior midfielder and forward scored 28 goals and passed for 12 assists this past season, leading the Trojans (10-5) to the Class B North Regional tournament. Also the Maine Soccer Coaches Association Class B Player of the Year, Curless is rated as the No. 68 recruit in the Class of 2016 by TopDrawerSoccer.com. She concluded her prep soccer career with 80 goals.

Curless has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. A ballet dancer who has appeared in a stage production of the Nutcracker, she is a member of the Mount Desert Island High student council and has volunteered locally with the SPCA in addition to donating her time as a youth soccer coach.

“Opal Curless is a player you could never leave alone on the field,” said John Plourde, head coach of John Bapst High. “If you marked her, you might be lucky enough to stop her from scoring, but you couldn’t stop her from creating runs and setting up her teammates for success.”

Curless has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Syracuse University beginning this fall.

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.

Curless joins recent Gatorade Maine Girls Soccer Players of the Year Cassie Symonds (2014-15 & 2013-14, Windham High School), Caitlin Bucksbaum (2012-13 & 2011-12, Falmouth High School), Allison Walton (2010–11 & 2009-10, Brunswick High School), Elise Amioka (2008–09, Marshwood High School), Rachele Burns (2007-08, Gorham High School), and Kelsey Wilson (2006-07, Gorham 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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