FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

 Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

O'Gorman High School STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE South Dakota 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 **Theresa Pujado of O'Gorman High School** as its **2015-16 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Pujado is the second Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from O'Gorman 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 Pujado as South Dakota’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, Pujado 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 led the Knights to a 13-0-2 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Pujado scored 10 goals and passed for three assists, scoring a pair of goals in a 4-1 win over Rapid City Central in the state final. The MVP of the state title match, Pujado was the Soccer605.com Class AA Player of the Year and is a two-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her junior year with 30 goals in her prep soccer career.

Pujado has maintained a weighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the O’Gorman High student council, she has volunteered locally delivering clothes to families in need and on behalf of multiple community-service initiatives through her church.

“Our whole game plan revolved around keeping the ball off of Theresa’s feet and not letting her get a head of steam moving forward,” said Jacob Shoup, head coach of Brandon Valley High. “She was the most dangerous player on the field in most games that she played.”

Pujado has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Pujado joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Soccer Players of the Year Jessica Ryan (2014-15, Belle Fourche High School), and KJ Medler (2013-14, St. Thomas More 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)*.*

###