FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

 Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

Proctor High School STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE Vermont 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 **Abby McKearin of Proctor High School** as its **2015-16 Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. McKearin is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Proctor 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 McKearin as Vermont’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, McKearin 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-3 senior forward scored 44 goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Phantoms to their third consecutive Division 4 state title. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, McKearin broke the state career record for goals with 168. She is a three-time All-State honoree and was named Player of the Year by the Burlington Free Press.

McKearin has maintained an A average in the classroom. Also a basketball standout and a devoted member of her church community, she has served as treasurer of her class and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs and a shelter for victims of domestic abuse.

“She can shoot with accuracy, finesse and power,” said Patrick Pullinen, head coach at Black River High. “She’s really demonstrated the ability to score consistently over the past four years.”

McKearin is undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

McKearin joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Soccer Players of the Year Madison Feeney (2014-15, Burlington High School), Katie Stames (2013-14 & 2012-13, Peoples Academy), Lauren Bernard (2011-12 & 2010–11, Colchester High School), Brittany Pfaff (2009-10, Rice Memorial High School), Natalie LeClair (2008–09 & 2007-08, Essex High School), and Emily Milbank (2006-07, Champlain Valley Union 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)*.*

###