

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**MINNETONKA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 11, 2016) — In its 31th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Suad Suljic of Minnetonka High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Suljic is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Minnetonka 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 Suljic as Minnesota's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Suljic 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, 140-pound senior forward scored 25 goals and passed for 20 assists this past season, leading the Skippers (16-4) to the Class 2A quarterfinals. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Soccer Player of the Year, Suljic is a two-time All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. He was also named the Class 2A Mr. Soccer and the Minneapolis Star Tribune Metro Player of the Year.

Suljic has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs and the Golden Living Center rehabilitation facility.

"Suljic is a fantastic player," said Dominic Duenas, head coach at Wayzata High. "His technical skills are topnotch, but so is his soccer IQ. He's dangerous every time he touches the ball."

Suljic remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Two-time winner Suljic joins Gatorade Minnesota Boys Soccer Players of the Year Justin Oliver (2013-14, North High School), Elliot Cassutt (2012-13, Minneapolis South High School), Matthew Gweh (2011-12, Eastview High School), Eric Miller (2010-11, Woodbury High School), Paul Yonga, (2009-10 & 2008-09, Totino-Grace High School), Keidoe Pour (2007-08, Saint Bernard's School), and Abe Gibbons (2006-07, South 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.

###