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**ANKENY CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE IOWA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 17, 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 Meg Brandt of Ankeny Centennial High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Brandt is the first Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Ankeny Centennial 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 Brandt as Iowa'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, Brandt 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 returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 5-foot-8 senior midfielder has led the Jaguars to a 14-0 record entering this week's regular-season game against Johnston High, scheduled for May 17. Brandt has scored 15 goals and passed for six assists out of her defensive central midfield position. A member of the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Olympic Development Program team, she was a 2015 Class 3A First Team All-State selection and the Class 3A Tournament MVP as a freshman playing for Ankeny High in 2013.

Brandt has maintained a weighted 3.28 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Ankeny Centennial student council, she was diagnosed with Type I Diabetes during the spring of her junior year. She has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit the Children's Miracle Network in addition to donating her time as a youth soccer and basketball referee.

"Meg Brandt is without a doubt the best player in Iowa," said JP Pearson, head coach of Dowling Catholic High. "The impact she has on her team is incredible. This girl has it all: speed, technical ability, vision and she's a good teammate."

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

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 Brandt joins Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Players of the Year Rose Ripslinger (2013-14, 2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Assumption High School), MacKenzie Misel (2009-10, Ankeny High School), Jade Grimm (2008-09, Kennedy High School), and Whitney Sharpe (2007-08 & 2006-07, Valley 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.

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