



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2007

**UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND ALL-AMERICA DEFENDER STEPHANIE LOPEZ NAMED  
WINNER OF 2007 LOWE'S SENIOR CLASS AWARD AS TOP SENIOR  
STUDENT-ATHLETE IN NCAA® DIVISION I WOMEN'S SOCCER**

**Award Presented by Lowe's At NCAA® Women's College Cup®**

(College Station, TX) – University of Portland defender **Stephanie Lopez** has combined her on-field and off-field achievements to earn the honor of being the first-ever recipient of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award for women's soccer. The award, selected by a nationwide vote of coaches, media and fans, is presented to the outstanding NCAA® Division I senior student-athlete in women's soccer.

Lowe's, an official corporate sponsor of the NCAA®, will present the trophy to Lopez today during the NCAA® Women's College Cup® in College Station, TX.

Earlier this year, Lowe's announced the addition of women's soccer and men's soccer to the award program, bringing the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award to a total of eight NCAA® sports. The award was originally launched in 2001 with basketball. An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award has grown into the nation's premier tribute to college seniors.

The award identifies personal qualities that define a complete student-athlete, with criteria including excellence in the **classroom**, **character** and **community**, as well as **competition** in sports.

"I am really honored to receive the inaugural Lowe's Senior CLASS Award for women's soccer," Lopez said. "It is a privilege to play sports at the collegiate level and important to recognize that you are blessed to have such an opportunity. It also provides a platform to give back to the community, if only in minor ways, and I think that is very significant. This award represents everything that I have strived hard to achieve: success in academics, being a good person and giving back to the community."

Lopez, a three-time All-America defender, realizes the importance of a complete college experience. During her first three years, Lopez helped Portland to a 60-7-7 record and led her team to the 2005 D-I national championship with an undefeated 24-0-2 record. In the process, she was named the West Coast Conference "Defender of the Year." Lopez missed several weeks of this year's soccer season playing for U.S. Women's National Team and leading the U.S. to a third-place finish at the 2007 World Cup in China. She had an opportunity to forgo her remaining collegiate eligibility and become a salaried player under contract with Team USA. But she decided to come back to Portland, remain loyal to her teammates and school, and earn her undergraduate degree. Since returning from the World Cup, Lopez led Portland to 11 straight wins and 10 shutouts before a season-ending, overtime loss to UCLA in the NCAA quarterfinals.

Lopez is a Psychology major with a 3.7 GPA and is on course to graduate in December 2007. She has earned Dean's List status seven consecutive semesters, and is a two-time West Coast Conference All-Academic selection.

Her community service has taken on a global reach. A descendent from a family that cared for over 90 foster children in the last 15 years, Lopez was preordained to partake in a vast amount of charity work. She helped her parents lead a group of teens to Egypt to paint an orphanage. She traveled to the Bahamas to clear land for the construction of a learning center. She joined her family in Mexico to serve meals to American missionaries. She also was part of a team that created a Hurricane Katrina fundraiser in 2005.

"Stephanie has been a wonderful ambassador for our soccer program and the University," said Garrett Smith, women's soccer coach at Portland. "On the field, Stephanie is the ultimate team player and makes everyone around her better, but that pales in comparison to the impact that she has on others off the field. It was a privilege to coach her for the last five years and the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award did it right by making her the first winner in the women's soccer category."

"Lowe's is extremely pleased to honor student-athletes who work hard to achieve goals in every aspect of life," said **Bob Gfeller**, SVP of Marketing and Advertising at Lowe's. "Stephanie Lopez is not only a very talented soccer player, but understands the importance of a quality education and how to make an impact in other people's lives through community service. She is an outstanding choice for the first ever Lowe's Senior CLASS Award winner in women's soccer."

The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award also names an All-Senior All-America Team based on voting results of the finalists. Joining Lopez on the 2007 First Team are: **Rachel Buehler** of Stanford University, **Jessica Maxwell** of the University of North Carolina, **Lindsey Ozimek** of Charlotte and **Ella Masar** of the University of Illinois. The Second Team consists of: **Valerie Henderson** of UCLA, **Angie Woznuk** of the University of Portland, **Joanna Haig** of the University of Louisville, **Kelsey Carpenter** of the University of Texas and **Courtney Hooker** of the University of California, Berkeley.

Sportscaster **Dick Enberg**, Honorary Chairman of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award, first conceived the idea of an award for seniors in 2001 in response to the growing trend of men's basketball players leaving school early for the NBA.

Lowe's has expanded the Senior CLASS Award program this year to include NCAA® Division I men's hockey, men's lacrosse, baseball and softball in addition to men's and women's basketball and now men's and women's soccer. The winner in each sport is announced at the respective NCAA® Championship events.

"Recognizing the many achievements of student-athletes is a goal the NCAA proudly shares with our corporate partner Lowe's," said Greg Shaheen, NCAA Senior Vice President for Basketball and Business Strategies. "The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award places a spotlight on the quality attributes of our future student-athlete graduates. The NCAA is proud to honor student-athlete leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to excel on the field of competition while they earn their degrees. "

# # # #

#### **ABOUT THE AWARD**

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award honors the attributes of senior student-athletes in four areas: classroom, community, character and competition. The award program is designed exclusively for college seniors who are utilizing their complete athletic eligibility, remaining committed to their university and pursuing the many rewards that a senior season can bring. For more information, visit [www.seniorclassaward.com](http://www.seniorclassaward.com).

#### **ABOUT LOWE'S**

With fiscal year 2006 sales of \$46.9 billion, Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE® 50 company that serves approximately 13 million customers a week at more than 1,425 home improvement stores in 49 states. Founded in 1946 and based in Mooresville, N.C., Lowe's is the second-largest home improvement retailer in the world. For more information, visit [www.Lowes.com](http://www.Lowes.com).

NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association

#### **CONTACT:**

Erik Miner  
Premier Sports Management  
913-681-6990

The Nation's Premier Award for  
NCAA Senior Student Athletes



## **All-Senior All-America Teams**

*As selected in balloting for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award by cumulative results of NCAA® Division I Coaches, National Media and Fan Balloting*

### **Women's Soccer**

#### ***First Team***

<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>School</b>
Stephanie	Lopez	D	5'6	Portland
Rachel	Buehler	D	5'8	Stanford
Jessica	Maxwell	D	5'8	North Carolina
Lindsey	Ozimek	M/F	5'7	Charlotte
Ella	Masar	F	5'5	Illinois

#### ***Second Team***

<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>School</b>
Valerie	Henderson	GK	5'7	UCLA
Angie	Woznuk	M/F	5'6	Portland
Joanna	Haig	GK	5'10	Louisville
Kelsey	Carpenter	F	5'6	Texas
Courtney	Hooker	D	5'8	California