

**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Brooks Rice of Spain Park High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Rice is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Spain Park 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 Rice as Alabama'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 June, Rice joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-10, 155-pound senior forward scored 37 goals and passed for 11 assists this past season, leading the Jaguars to an 11-10-2 record. A 2017 First Team All-State selection, Rice recorded 10 multi-goal games including four hat tricks. A member of the U.S. Youth Soccer Region III Olympic Development Team, he concluded his prep soccer career with 84 goals.

Rice has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and referee, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "We had a young team this season, and Brooks was a calming influence on the players during the course of the game," said Matt Hall, head coach of Spain Park High. "He is a very intelligent player who knows how to create space for himself and teammates to initiate attacks."

Rice has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Rice joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Players of the Year Kennedy Davis (2016-17, Oak Mountain High School), JJ Williams (2015-16, Alabama Christian Academy), Eduvie Ikoba (2014-15, Bob Jones High School), Jake Rufe (2013-14, Grissom High School), Chandler Stroupe (2012-13, Oak Mountain High School), Jack Hopkins (2011-12, Vestavia Hills High School), Nathan Diehl (2010-11 & 2009-10, Mountain Brook High School), Chandler Hoffman (2008-09 & 2007-08 Oak Mountain High School), and Paul Willoughby (2006-07, Grissom) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rice will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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).

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