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**ATHENS DRIVE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 23, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Cooper Vandermaas-Peeler of Athens Drive High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Vandermaas-Peeler is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Athens Drive 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 Vandermaas-Peeler as North Carolina'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, Vandermaas-Peeler joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Tony Meola (1986-87, Kearney HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-9, 155-pound senior forward recorded 27 goals and 15 assists this past season, leading the Jaguars (18-4-4) to the Class 4A East state semifinals. A 2010 ESPN RISE Second Team All-American selection, Vandermaas-Peeler was a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Men's National Team that traveled to Israel for a tournament in December. He scored the lone goal for the U.S. team in the three-game event. The Jaguars' standout concluded his prep soccer career with 36 goals and 21 assists.

Peeler has maintained a 3.43 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with a school youth group.

"Cooper Vandermaas-Peeler is a very creative player, very technical, a tremendous one-on-one attacking player," said Rusty Scarborough, Director of Coaching at the Capital Area Soccer League. "He's the kind of player that's going to break teams down with his technical ability and his creative ability to run at people. Cooper is someone you want on your team."

Peeler has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Vandermaas-Peeler joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Soccer Players of the Year Teddy Mullin (2009-10, Jordan), Ben Newnam (2008-09, East Forsyth), and Watt Williams (2007-08, Broughton) 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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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