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**VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 15, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Jack Hopkins of Vestavia Hills High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Hopkins is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Vestavia Hills 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 Hopkins 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 May, Hopkins 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 6-foot-1, 170-pound senior forward scored 29 goals and passed for 28 assists this past season, leading the Rebels (26-3) to the Class 6A state semifinals for a second straight year. The 2011 Birmingham News Boys Metro South Player of the Year, Hopkins recorded four goals and five assists in the Class 6A state tournament. He concluded his prep soccer career with 88 goals and 59 assists.

Hopkins has maintained a 3.9 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Mu Alpha Theta mathematics honor society, he has volunteered locally with Habitat for Humanity and as a youth soccer coach.

"Jack Hopkins dictates what other teams can and cannot do on the field because at any time he can become a threat that is very difficult to deal with," said Joe Carter, head coach at rival Spain Park High. "He can use both feet well and his body size deceivingly makes you believe he will be slow and unable to play quickly, but you will only make that mistake once."

Hopkins has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Marshall University 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 ESPNHS 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.

Hopkins joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Players of the Year Nathan Diehl (2010-11 & 2009-10, Mountain Brook High School), Chandler Hoffman (2008-09 & 2007-08, Oak Mountain High School), and Paul Willoughby (2006-2007, Grissom) 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.

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