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**WEST JONES HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 23, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Sara Coleman of West Jones High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Coleman is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from West Jones 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 Coleman as Mississippi'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, Coleman 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 5-foot-4 senior midfielder scored 33 goals and passed for 21 assists this past season, leading the Mustangs (17-3-3) to the Class 5A state championship game. Coleman is a four-time First Team All-State selection and was named Miss Soccer by the Clarion-Ledger.

Coleman has maintained a 3.74 average in the classroom. A member of her school's student council, she has volunteered as a math tutor and has raised funds to benefit the American Heart Association and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"Coleman's speed and athletic ability set her apart," said Craig Winship, head coach at Ridgeland High. "She has a tremendous work ethic and she's such a good facilitator for her team."

Coleman has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Mississippi 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.

Coleman joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Players of the Year Laura Lee Smith (2009-10 & 2010 - 11, Jackson Preparatory School), Tricia Tillman (2008-09 Madison Central), Kelsey Myrick (2007-08, Gulfport), and Rachel Givan (2006-07, Ridgeland) 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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