

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (November 29, 2012) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Nick Mullens of Spain Park High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year. Mullens is the first Gatorade Alabama Football 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 Mullens as Alabama's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Mullens joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 6-foot-1, 180-pound senior quarterback passed for 3,629 yards and 40 touchdowns, leading the Jaguars (10-3) to the Class 6A state semifinals. A 2011 Class 6A All-State Honorable Mention selection, Mullens completed 290-of-453 attempts (64 percent) while throwing seven interceptions. He threw at least three touchdown passes in nine of Spain Park's 13 games.

A member of Spain Park student government, he has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with the National Honor Society, and has also donated his time as a peer mentor and youth football instructor.

"Nick Mullens is an incredible quarterback," said Jeremy Perkins, head coach of Austin High. "He is very difficult to defend because he can make every throw and he has a great understanding of the game. It does not matter if you bring pressure or drop eight into coverage, he can pick you apart."

Mullens remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with USA TODAY High School Sports, 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.

Mullens joins recent Gatorade Alabama Football Players of the Year Jameis Winston (2011-12, Hueytown High School), Jamal Golden (2010-11, Wetumpka High School), Coty Blanchard (2009-10, Cherokee County), Clint Moseley (2008-09, Leroy High School) and Julio Jones (2007-08, Foley) 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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