

**Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)**

**YULEE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® FLORIDA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (November 29, 2012) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Derrick Henry of Yulee High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year. Henry is the first Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Yulee 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 Henry as Florida's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Henry 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-3, 241-pound senior running back has led the Hornets to a 9-3 record entering the Class 4A state semifinals, scheduled for November 30. The returning Class 4A Player of the Year as named by the Florida Dairy Farmers Association, Henry rushed for 3,944 yards and 51 touchdowns on 422 carries entering the postseason final four. His 11,801 career rushing yards broke Texas native Ken Hall's 59-year-old national prep record. The No. 3 ranked running back in the Class of 2013 as rated by Rivals, Henry also rushed for a state-record 502 yards in a 45-28 win over Jackson High on Sept. 21.

Henry has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth football instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the Special Olympics and as the lead fundraiser for the Yulee High football program.

"If there is one player out there as good as Derrick Henry, I would love to see him," said Mark Woolum, head coach of rival South Lake High. "He is the best high school football player I have ever seen play the game. Not only is he good, but he is durable. We really hit him in our game, and he kept breaking tackles. He never slowed down."

Henry has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Alabama beginning in the fall of 2013.

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.

Henry joins recent Gatorade Florida Football Players of the Year William Likely (2011-12, Glades Central High School), Jeff Driskel (2010-11, Paul J. Hagerty High School), Matt Elam (2009-10, William T. Dwyer), Jacobbi McDaniel (2008-09, Madison County High School) and Brandon Harris (2007-08, Booker T. Washington) 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).

###