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Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

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

CHICAGO (May 13, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jake Rufe of Grissom High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Rufe is the second Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Grissom 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 Rufe 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, Rufe 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-2, 165-pound senior defender scored seven goals and passed for six assists this past season, leading the Tigers (18-8) to the second round of the Class 6A state tournament. Rufe is a three-time Huntsville Times All-Metro selection and plays for the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Olympic Development Program team.

Rufe has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Grissom High Spanish National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally at a food bank and homeless shelter and completed a service-mission trip to the Ukraine.

"Jake Rufe was the sole reason Grissom had a successful season," said Uwe Spiller, head coach of Bob Jones High. "His speed and technique with the ball are unmatched in the state. He has great vision and his offensive decision-making and defensive decision-making are excellent."

Rufe has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Indiana 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 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.

Rufe joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Soccer Players of the Year Chandler Stroupe (2012-13, Oak Mountain High School), Jack Hopkins (2011-12, Vestavia Hills High School), 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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