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**BEN FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE LOUISIANA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 20, 2014) — In its 29<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 Alex Thomas of Ben Franklin High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Thomas is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Ben Franklin 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 Thomas as Louisiana'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, Thomas 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-2 sophomore forward scored 44 goals and passed for eight assists this past season, leading the Falcons (20-0) to the Division II state championship. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Thomas was chosen Division II Player of the Year by the Louisiana High School Soccer Coaches Association and was named All-Metro Offensive Player of the Year by the Times-Picayune.

Thomas has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. An English and Latin tutor in her school, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a nursing home and youth sports programs.

"Thomas is very quick, very explosive," said Al Silvis, head coach at Dominican High. "She sees the field very well and technically she's very good on the ball. She's able to get behind most defenses and whenever they need a goal, she's the one they lean on."

Thomas will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Thomas joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Girls Soccer Players of the Year Delaney Sheehan (2012-13 & 2011-12, Mandeville High School), Katherine Cuntz (2010 - 11, St. Mary's Dominican High School), Emily Cancienne (2009-10, Baton Rouge Magnet), Tricia Johnson (2008-09, St. Scholastica Academy), Kellie Murphy (2007-08, St. Thomas More Catholic), and Hannah Macormic (2006-2007, Mandeville) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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