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

CHICAGO (May 19, 2015) — In its 30th 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 2014-15 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 senior forward scored 57 goals and passed for 15 assists this past season, leading the Falcons (23-0-2) to their third consecutive Division II state championship. The state's returning Gatorade Louisiana Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Thomas is a three-time First Team All-State honoree and was selected Division II Player of the Year by the Louisiana High School Soccer Coaches Association each of the last two seasons.

Thomas has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. An English and Latin tutor in her school, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a nursing home and multiple youth sports programs.

"Thomas is a special player," said Daniel Underwood, head coach at St. Thomas More High. "Even though you game-plan to try and stop her, she's able to adapt and create opportunities for herself and teammates."

Thomas has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Louisiana State 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.

Two-time winner Thomas joins 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 High School), Tricia Johnson (2008-09, St. Scholastica Academy), Kellie Murphy (2007-08, St. Thomas More Catholic), and Hannah Macormic (2006-07, Mandeville High School) 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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