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**LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 17, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Alley Houghton of Lafayette High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Houghton is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Lafayette 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 Houghton as Mississippi'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, Houghton 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-3 senior forward scored 71 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Commodores (19-3) to the Class 4A state final. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Houghton concluded her prep career with 250 goals, shattering the state record. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, she is also a two-time Clarion-Ledger First Team All-State honoree.

Houghton has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Oxford Humane Society and the Special Olympics.

"I think I've seen her make more shots than she's missed," said Mac Holland, head coach at Pontotoc High. "She's just so fast and her placement and accuracy are amazing. She understands the game so well and knows how to manipulate a defense. It makes her almost impossible to stop."

Houghton has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Mississippi 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 Houghton joins Gatorade Mississippi Girls Soccer Players of the Year Beth Coleman (2013-14, West Jones High School), Marion Crowder (2012-13, Madison Central High School), Sara Coleman (2011-12, West Jones High School), Laura Lee Smith (2010-11 & 2009-10, Jackson Preparatory School), Tricia Tillman (2008-09, Madison Central High School), Kelsey Myrick (2007-08, Gulfport High School), and Rachel Givan (2006-07, Ridgeland 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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