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**WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 12, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Josh Hughes of Westminster Christian Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Hughes is the first Gatorade Louisiana Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Westminster Christian Academy.

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 Hughes as Louisiana'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 June, Hughes joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-9, 170-pound senior forward and midfielder scored 28 goals and passed for 18 assists this past season, leading the Crusaders (16-5) to the Division IV quarterfinals. The state's Division IV Offensive MVP each of the past two seasons, Hughes is also an All-State, All-Parish and All-Acadiana selection.

A devoted member of his church youth group, Hughes has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs and flood relief efforts. "Hughes is very fast, strong and decisive," said Sean LeBlanc, head coach at St. Charles Catholic High School. "He's just a very talented player, one of the most dangerous players I've coached against."

Hughes has maintained a 3.43 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Campbell 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Hughes joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Boys Soccer Players of the Year Colin Ross (2015-16, St. Paul's School), Colin Hanley (2014-15, St. Paul's School), Andrew Malinich (2013-14, Lusher Charter School), Ethan Judice (2012-13, Lafayette High School), Phillip Hicks (2011-12, Jesuit High School), Adrian McInnis (2010-11, St. Paul's School), Steven Cabos (2009-10, Jesuit High School), Patrick Mullins (2008-09, Jesuit High School), Nick Flowers (2007-08, Caddo Parish Magnet High School), and Andrew Mullins (2006-07, Jesuit High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Josh will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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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