

**CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 16, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Luke Hopkins** of **Clinton High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Hopkins is the fifth Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Clinton 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 Hopkins as Mississippi'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, Hopkins joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02 & 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-05, Blue Valley West High School, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire High School, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.).

The 6-foot-2, 180-pound senior midfielder scored 11 goals and passed for six assists this past season, leading the Arrows (15-5-3) to the Class 6A state championship. An SBLive First Team All-State honoree, Hopkins scored the only goal in Clinton's state championship game victory. He was also MVP of the Mississippi Athletic Conference All-Star game and was named a finalist for the USA TODAY's Mississippi High School Sports Awards Boys Soccer Player of the Year award.

A devoted member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Hopkins has volunteered locally on behalf of the Pinelake Church youth group. "Luke Hopkins is, hands down, the best player we faced this year," said Randy West, head coach at Brandon High School. "He makes excellent runs, with and without the ball, and creates a lot of opportunities for his teammates. He's very focused and he really carried that team on his back."

Hopkins has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will attend Pearl River Community College this fall, where he will play soccer.

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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Hopkins joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Soccer Players of the Year Emery Thigpen (2020-21, Jackson Academy), Heath Flathau (2019-20, Sacred Heart Catholic School), and Ashton LeBlanc (2018-19 & 2017-18, Gulfport High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Hopkins has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Hopkins is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).