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**SOLDOTNA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® ALASKA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 2, 2010) — In its third decade of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Robbie Smithwick of Soldotna High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year. Smithwick is the fourth Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Soldotna 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 Smithwick as Alaska's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Smithwick joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 5-foot-7, 180-pound senior running back, linebacker, kicker and punter led the Stars to an 11-0 record and the Small School state title this past season. Smithwick rushed for 1,241 yards and 17 touchdowns on 67 carries. The 2010 Small School Offensive player of the Year, Smithwick also earned First Team All-State honors as a punter and kicker, averaging 39.5 yards per punt and accumulating 27 touchbacks on kickoffs. As a linebacker, he made 47 tackles for a defense that allowed 16.6 points per game.

Smithwick has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army in addition to donating his time as a bible camp counselor and youth basketball coach.

"Robbie Smithwick is a fantastic athlete, a great kid and a great student," said Norman Bouchard, head coach of rival Houston High. "Soldotna was not expected to be a powerhouse again this year and it was his effort that got them there."

Smithwick remains undecided upon a college destination.

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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Smithwick joins recent Gatorade Alaska Football Players of the Year Justin Kauffman (2009-10, West Anchorage), Anthony Griglione (2008-09, Soldotna) and Bill Chimphalee (2007-08, Kenai Central) 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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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