

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**MADISON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MICHIGAN 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 Valdez Showers of Madison High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year. Showers is the first Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Madison 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 Showers as Michigan's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Showers 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 6-foot-1, 185-pound senior running back rushed for 2,024 yards and 29 touchdowns on 235 carries, leading the Eagles (9-3) to the Division 5 state quarterfinals this past season. A MetroPCS Mr. Football Award candidate, Showers also hauled in 18 receptions for 257 yards and three touchdowns. As a shutdown defensive back, he recorded 19 tackles, three interceptions and two fumble recoveries this past fall. Showers rushed for 1,572 yards and 20 touchdowns in addition to recording 49 tackles and 12 pass breakups as a junior in 2009.

Showers has maintained a 3.25 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of the Police Athletic League and as a youth football instructor.

"His best asset is his humility," said Madison Head Coach Drake Wilkins. "He still works like he's in ninth grade, trying to prove his worth on the varsity. In crunch time and crucial moments, he'll kick it to another level and be the leader. He's never walked around school, strutting like the big man on campus who has already committed to Florida. He's a coach's dream."

Showers has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Florida beginning in the fall of 2011.

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.

Showers joins recent Gatorade Michigan Football Players of the Year Jason Fracassa (2009-10, Stevenson), Joe Glendening (2008-09, East Grand Rapids) and Mike Martin (2007-08, Detroit Catholic 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.

###