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**CHAPARRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 1, 2011) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Davonte Neal of Chaparral High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year. Neal is the second Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Chaparral 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 Neal as Arizona's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Neal 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 state's returning Gatorade Football Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10, 175-pound senior running back, wide receiver and kick returner led the Firebirds to a 14-1 record and the Division II state championship this past season. Neal rushed for 1,317 yards and 16 touchdowns on 100 carries and caught 62 passes for 1,113 yards and 14 touchdowns. He also averaged 39.4 yards on kickoff returns, returning three for touchdowns, and 26.6 yards on punt returns, with two scores. The 2010 Arizona Republic State Player of the Year, he is the No. 29 rated recruit in the Class of 2012 by ESPNU.

Neal has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a middle school mentor and as a youth football coach.

"Davonte Neal is the guy you need to know where he is at all times," said Steve Casey, head coach of rival Horizon High. "He can hurt you as a receiver, running back and quarterback in the Wildcat formation and that is just on offense. He is also a very good cover guy and a great returner."

Neal remains undecided upon a collegiate 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 ESPNHS 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.

Neal joins recent Gatorade Arizona Football Players of the Year Brett Hundley (2009-10, Chandler), Craig Roh (2008-09, Chaparral High School) and Tim Ruben (2007-08, Saguardo) 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.

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