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**MASUK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT 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 Casey Cochran of Masuk High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Connecticut Football Player of the Year. Cochran is the first Gatorade Connecticut Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Masuk 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 Cochran as Connecticut's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Cochran 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 6-foot-2, 205-pound senior quarterback led the Panthers to an 11-0 record and a berth in the Class L state semifinals against Hand High, scheduled for Dec. 3. Cochran passed for 2,801 yards and 36 touchdowns through 11 games, completing 119-of-167 attempts while throwing just four interceptions. He also rushed for four touchdowns. Cochran won a Class SS state title with New London High as a freshman in 2008 and with Masuk in 2010. He is the state's career leader in two categories with 10,501 yards passing and 108 touchdowns.

Cochran has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. The winner of the Masuk High Book Award for Introduction to Engineering and Algebra I and Geometry, he has volunteered locally at area food banks for the needy, as a youth football coach and as a peer tutor.

"It's scary how someone can be that accurate," said Joe Lato, head coach of rival Weston High. "It's unbelievable what Casey Cochran can do. I haven't seen a high school quarterback like him. He makes everybody look silly."

Cochran has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Connecticut beginning in the fall of 2012.

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.

Cochran joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Football Players of the Year Kevin Pierre-Louis (2009-10, King Low Heywood Thomas), Mike Osiecki (2008-09, Seymour High School) and Alex Thomas (2007-08, Ansonia) 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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