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**HILLGROVE HS STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® GEORGIA 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 Kenyan Drake of Hillgrove HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Georgia Football Player of the Year. Drake is the first Gatorade Georgia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Hillgrove HS.

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 Drake as Georgia's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Drake 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, 205-pound senior running back rushed for 1,610 yards and 18 touchdowns on 173 carries this past season, leading the Hawks to the second round of the Class AAAAA postseason. A preseason First Team All-State selection as named by ESPNHS, Drake also hauled in 24 receptions for 315 yards and five touchdowns. On special teams, he returned 10 kickoffs for 355 yards and two scores. An Atlanta Journal-Constitution Super 11 selection, he totaled 1,600 yards and 20 touchdowns rushing and receiving as a junior in 2010.

Also a baseball standout, Drake has maintained a 3.23 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered year-round as a baseball and football instructor at local youth camps.

"Drake is a great young man with tremendous work ethic and drive," said Shane Queen, head coach of rival North Cobb High. "He is one of the best players that I have coached against in 18 years. "He is a man of great character and does well in the classroom. If there is a better young man, player or role model, I would love to see him."

Drake has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Alabama 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.

Drake joins recent Gatorade Georgia Football Players of the Year Brian Randolph (2010-11, Kell High School) Hutson Mason (2009-10, Lassiter), Branden Smith (2008-09, Booker T. Washington High School) and Tavarres King (2007-08, Habersham 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.

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