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**COEUR D'ALENE HS STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® IDAHO 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 Chad Chalich of Coeur d'Alene HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Idaho Football Player of the Year. Chalich is the first Gatorade Idaho Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Coeur d'Alene 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 Chalich as Idaho's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Chalich 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 quarterback led the Vikings to a 12-0 record and their second consecutive Class 5A state championship this past season. Chalich passed for 3,636 yards and 42 touchdowns, completing 242 of 331 attempts while throwing just two interceptions. The Class 5A Player of the Year as a junior, he also rushed for 471 yards and 14 touchdowns.

Chalich has maintained a 3.52 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the homeless and the Elderhelp of North Idaho program.

"Chalich is a really good athlete," said Judd Benedick, head coach of rival Mountain View High. "He's a very accurate passer. He's got great feet, very mobile in the pocket and he makes all the throws he needs to make."

Chalich 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.

Chalich joins recent Gatorade Idaho Football Players of the Year Cody McCarthy (2010-11, Bishop Kelly High School) Taylor Kelly (2009-10, Eagle), Taysom Hill (2008-09, Highland High School) and Byron Hout (2007-08, Lake City) 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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