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**COLUMBUS EAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® INDIANA 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 Gunner Kiel of Columbus East High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year. Kiel is the first Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Columbus East 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 Kiel as Indiana's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Kiel 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-4, 215-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,517 yards and 28 touchdowns this past season, completing 127-of-240 passes while throwing just four interceptions and leading the Olympians (12-2) to the Class 4A semifinals. A 2012 U.S. Army All-American and ranked No. 20 among recruits in the Class of 2012 as rated by ESPNU, Kiel completed 90 touchdown passes against 25 interceptions as a three-year varsity starter.

Kiel has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has assisted in relief efforts for Columbus area flood victims and volunteered locally as a youth football coach and an elementary school guest reader.

"Gunner Kiel is an outstanding football player," said Steven Fish, head coach of rival Madison High. "What impresses me the most about him is his command of the offense. He literally looked like Peyton Manning, calling out plays, pointing to potential blitzing players and orchestrating his offense. He knows what he wants to do and is very efficient."

Kiel remains undecided upon a college 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.

Kiel joins recent Gatorade Indiana Football Players of the Year Matt McIntosh (2010-11, F.J. Reitz High School) Kofi Hughes (2009-10, Cathedral), Morgan Newton (2008-09, Carmel High School) and Paul McIntosh (2007-08, F.J. Reitz) 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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