

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)**

**BISHOP MIEGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® KANSAS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 1, 2011) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Montell Cozart of Bishop Miege High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Football Player of the Year. Cozart is the first Gatorade Kansas Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Miege 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 Cozart as Kansas's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Cozart 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-2, 175-pound junior quarterback passed for 2,448 yards and 31 touchdowns against just seven interceptions this past season, completing 161-of-255 passes and leading the Stags (9-2) to the Class 5A state quarterfinals. Cozart also rushed for 534 yards and seven touchdowns on 116 carries. The 2011 East Kansas League Offensive Player of the Year, Cozart was responsible for at least two touchdowns via run or pass in each of Bishop Miege's 11 games.

Cozart has maintained a 3.55 GPA in the classroom. A member of Bishop Miege's campus ministry program, he has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and tutor and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church.

"Montell Cozart had a special year this season," said Mike Zegunis, head coach of rival Blue Valley Northwest High. "He was a dangerous player—good at running and passing. He put up terrific numbers this season."

Cozart will begin his senior year of high school next fall.

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.

Cozart joins recent Gatorade Kansas Football Players of the Year Bubba Starling (2010-11, Gardner Edgerton High School) Blake Bell (2008-09 & 2009-10, Bishop Carroll Catholic), and Bryce Brown (2007-08, East) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

###