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**HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KENTUCKY 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 Patrick Towles of Highlands High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year. Towles is the third Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Highlands 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 Towles as Kentucky's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Towles 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-6, 235-pound senior quarterback has led the Bluebirds to a 14-0 record and a berth in the Class 4A state championship game against Franklin-Simpson High, scheduled for Dec. 3. Towles has passed for 3,637 yards and 41 touchdowns entering the state title game, completing 169 of 261 passes while throwing just one interception. He has also rushed for 467 yards and 14 touchdowns on 81 carries. MVP of the 2010 Class 5A state championship game, Towles has a 37-1 record as a starting quarterback and helped Highlands break a state record with 807 points thus far this season.

Towles has maintained a 3.47 GPA in the classroom. A member of his school's senior council, he has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's vacation Bible school and as a peer tutor in mathematics.

"Towles is a great athlete with a great arm who can throw it from one end of the field to the other," said Boyle County High head coach Larry French. "He makes good decisions, and he's a winner. He's as good as they come."

Towles has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Towles joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Football Players of the Year Lamar Dawson (2010-11, Boyle County High School) Antonio Andrews (2009-10, Fort Campbell), Rolandan "Deuce" Finch (2008-09, St. Xavier High School) and John Cole (2007-08, Somerset) 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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