

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

**LA SALLE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Josh Morris of La Salle Academy as its 2011-12 Gatorade Rhode Island Football Player of the Year. Morris is the fourth Gatorade Rhode Island Football Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Morris as Rhode Island's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Morris 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 5-foot-9, 170-pound junior running back and cornerback led the Rams to a 10-1 record and a berth in the Division I state championship against Bishop Hendricken High, scheduled for Dec. 3. Morris rushed for 1,278 yards and 16 touchdowns on 134 carries through 11 games and caught nine passes for 175 yards and a score. A 2010 First Team All-Division I selection, he is averaging 39.8 yards per kickoff return, with one touchdown, and has recorded two interceptions on defense.

Morris has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and football coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church community.

"Every game, he's getting better," said Geoff Marcone, La Salle Academy's head coach. "The kid wants to be great in everything that he does. A lot of high school kids say they want to be the best, but very few work to be the best. He's doing everything he can to make himself better."

Morris 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.

Morris joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Football Players of the Year Ben Willett (2010-11, Portsmouth High School) Mike Read (2009-10, Barrington), Dave D'Errico (2008-09, North Kingstown High School) and Bobby Bentsen (2007-08, Warwick Veterans) 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).

###