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**ALEDO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TEXAS 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 **Johnathan Gray of Aledo High School** as its **2011-12 Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year**. Gray is the first Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Aledo 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 Gray as Texas's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Gray 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 state's returning Gatorade Football Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10, 202-pound senior running back, Gray has led the Bearcats to a 11-2 record and a berth in the Class 4A, Division II state quarterfinals against Stephenville High, scheduled for Dec. 3. Gray rushed for 3,236 yards and 58 touchdowns on 277 carries entering the postseason round of eight. The state's returning Gatorade Football Player of the Year, he also hauled in 22 receptions for 458 yards and five scores through 13 games. Gray set state records in career touchdowns, career points, career 100-yard games and single-season rushing touchdowns. He became the third prep athlete in state history to eclipse 10,000 career rushing yards.

Serving on his school's student council and as an Aledo High student representative on the Aledo Independent School District Health Committee, Gray has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth football instructor and a mentor to special education students, he has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group, an alcohol and drug awareness program and Baylor All Saints Hospital's Helping Hands Foundation.

"Gray is patient behind blockers and let's them do their work," said Kevin Golden, head coach of rival Timber Creek High. "This is uncommon for high school running backs. When there is a crease in the line, he accelerates through so fast that the tackler can't get a good shot on him. If they do, he has great strength and runs through the tackle. Once he gets in the open field, all is lost. You can't catch him. He can also catch the ball out of the backfield as well as any receiver."

Gray has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Gray joins recent Gatorade Texas Football Players of the Year Scotty Young (2009-10, Billy Ryan), Garrett Gilbert (2008-09, Lake Travis High School) and Riley Dodge (2007-08, Southlake Carroll) 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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