

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**LAKE TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TEXAS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 14, 2011) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Amy Neal of Lake Travis High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year. Neal is the first Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lake Travis 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 court, distinguishes Neal as Texas' best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Neal joins an elite alumni association of past state volleyball award winners, including USA Volleyball players Kim Glass (2001-02, Horseshoe HS, Penn.), Kim Willoughby (1998-99, 1999-00, Assumption HS, La.) and Ogonna Nnamani (1999-00, University HS, Ill).

The 5-foot-10 senior outside hitter led the Cavaliers to a Texas-record 50-0 season, the Class 4A state title and a No. 2 national ranking in the ESPNHS Fab 50 this fall. A 2011-12 Under Armour First Team All-American, Neal recorded 538 kills, 287 digs and 63 service aces. She is a two-time Class 4A State Tournament MVP and a two-time member of the Lone Star Volleyball All-Texas Team. Neal was also named MVP of the USA Volleyball 17 Open Girls' Junior National Championships.

Neal has maintained a 3.39 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics.

"Amy Neal is an amazing player," said Rebekah Almanza, head coach of rival Cedar Park High. "Her technique is perfect, she puts such velocity on the ball and she's able to elevate. When she turns it on, it doesn't matter who is around her defensively."

Neal has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on 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.

Neal joins recent Gatorade Texas Volleyball Players of the Year Tiffany Baker (2010-11, Hebron High School), Sara Shaw (2009-10, Westlake) and Torri Campbell (2008-09, Amarillo) 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.

###