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Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**POLYTECH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DELAWARE BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 22, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Eric Laster of Polytech High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Delaware Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Laster is the first Gatorade Delaware Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Polytech 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 Laster as Delaware's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Laster joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-6, 195-pound senior forward averaged 22 points, 10 rebounds, four assists, four blocks and three assists per game this past season, leading the Panthers (20-4) to the state tournament quarterfinals. A 2011 First Team All-State selection, Laster scored a game-high 15 points in a 55-36 win over Smyrna High to help Polytech capture the 2012 Henlopen Conference championship.

Laster has maintained an 88.7 average in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and the annual AIDS Walk Delaware.

"Eric Laster is very special talent," said Stephen Wilson, head coach at Dover High. "He is as good a player as there is in the state but even more than that he is an exemplary citizen on and off the court.

Laster remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Laster joins recent Gatorade Delaware Boys Basketball Players of the Year Tim Massado (2010-11, St. Elizabeth High School), Corey Crawford (2009-10, Dover), Paul Reynolds (2008-09, Smyrna High School), Erique Gumbs (2007-08, Caravel Academy), and Jarrett Mann (2006-07, Middletown) 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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