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**MELBA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® IDAHO BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 22, 2012) — 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 Joey Nebeker of Melba High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Nebeker is the first Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Melba 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 Nebeker as Idaho'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, Nebeker 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-7, 200-pound senior forward averaged 22.8 points, 9.9 rebounds, three steals, 2.7 blocks and 2.5 assists per game this past season, leading the Mustangs (16-6) to the third round of the Class 2A district tournament. The 2012 Western Idaho Conference co-Player of the Year, Nebeker helped Melba capture consecutive Class 2A state titles in 2010 and 2011.

Nebeker has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. A devoted parishioner of his church community, he has volunteered locally as an elementary school tutor, on behalf of a literacy-outreach initiative and as part of multiple food and clothing drives for needy families.

"Joey Nebeker has been the most impressive player in our district for the past few seasons," said Drew Hellwege, head coach at Nampa Christian High. "Even this season when our league was packed full of very good talent, he really stood out. As all good defensive big men do, he didn't block every shot but he made other players think he was going to."

Nebeker has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Boise State University this 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.

Nebeker joins Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Players of the Year Kyle Dranginis (2009-10 & 2010-11, Skyview High School), Josh Fuller (2008-09, Madison High School), Mitch Bruneel (2007-08, Eagle High School), and Matt Ballenger (2006-07, Skyview) 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).

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