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SIMEON CAREER ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 **Jabari Parker of Simeon Career Academy** as its **2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Parker is the second Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Simeon Career 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 court, distinguishes Parker as Illinois' 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, Parker 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-8, 220-pound junior wing led the Wolverines to a 33-1 record and a third consecutive Class 4A state championship this past season. Parker averaged 19.5 points, 8.9 rebounds, 4.9 assists, 3.3 blocks and 1.4 steals per game. The Player of the Year as named by *ESPNChicago.com* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Parker shot 55.2 percent from the field, 41.8 percent from 3-point range and 72.6 percent from the free throw line. Also the ESPNHS National Player of the Year in his graduating class each of the past two seasons, he averaged 15.4 points and 6.4 rebounds for USA Basketball's U16 National Team during an unbeaten five-game run to the 2011 FIBA Americas U16 Championship this past summer, capturing tournament Most Valuable Player honors and earning USA Basketball's prestigious 2011 Male Athlete of the Year award.

Parker has maintained a 3.63 weighted GPA in the classroom and serves as President of Student Representatives with the Local School Council. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered locally with Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), the Salvation Army and the New Beginnings Church. He is also a seminary bible study student as well as a senior citizen youth ambassador in association with the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints Hyde Park Ward.

"Jabari is a once-in-a-lifetime player and person," said Paul Biancardi, National Director, ESPN Basketball Recruiting. "As a person, he is incredible, humble and hard-working, regardless of his accolades. On the court, he influences the game with his unique ability to be both a scorer and a facilitator. The versatility allows him to score in the paint and on the perimeter. He possesses outstanding size, combined with an accurate shooting touch from deep, and has added a mid-range game that makes him hard to defend. His ball-handling and passing are exceptional, as he seldom gets rattled. His overall basketball IQ and instincts to play the game at a high level at such a young age make him very special with a very bright future."

Parker will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Parker joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Players of the Year Chasson Randle (2010-11, Rock Island High School), Rayvonte Rice (2009-10, Centennial), Matt Vogrich (2008-09, Lake Forest High School), Michael Dunigan (2007-08, Farragut Career Academy), and Derrick Rose (2006-07, Simeon) 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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