

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**WICHITA HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Perry Ellis of Wichita Heights High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Ellis is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wichita Heights 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 Ellis as Kansas' 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, Ellis 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 state's three-time returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Ellis led the Falcons to a 23-2 record and a fourth consecutive Class 6A state championship this past season. The 6-foot-8, 225-pound senior power forward amassed 29 points and seven rebounds in a 67-60, title-clinching victory against Blue Valley Northwest High. The McDonald's All-American averaged 25.8 points, 9.4 rebounds, 1.6 assists, 1.0 blocks and 1.0 steals per game. Also a three-time returning Class 6A First Team All-State selection as named by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association, he shot 67.0 percent from the field, 43.4 percent from 3-point range and 78.3 percent from the free throw line. Ellis is the first boys basketball player in the nation to win Gatorade State Boys Basketball Player of the Year honors four times in the award program's 27-year history.

Ellis has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 1 in his graduating class and serves as secretary of his school's National Honor Society chapter. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Wichita Children's Home, with the Real Men, Real Heroes' Teen Hero program, as part of multiple youth literacy-outreach initiatives and as a motivational speaker to youth athletes, addressing the importance of education.

"He has continued to achieve excellence as a player with outstanding character," said Ron Allen, head coach at East High. "I can't think of anyone that has done as much for his team and himself than Perry."

Ellis has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Kansas 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.

Four-time winner Ellis joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Travis Releford (2007-08, Bishop Miege High School), and Tyrel Reed (2006-07, Burlington) 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.

###