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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA 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 Dexter Werner of Bismarck High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Werner is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Werner as North Dakota'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, Werner 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-5, 210-pound senior forward averaged 20.2 points, 8.7 rebounds, 2.7 assists and 1.8 steals per game this past season, leading the Demons (21-4) to the Class 4A quarterfinals. Also the 2010-11 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Werner is a three-time First Team All-State selection.

Werner has maintained a 4.0 in the classroom and is ranked first in his class of 371 students. A member of the Spanish Club, the Key Club and the Boy Scouts of America, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the American Cancer Society, the Special Olympics and recently completed a service-mission trip to the Dominican Republic.

"Dexter Werner is a tremendous player who has a major impact on every game he plays," said Joe Mueller, head coach at St. Mary's High. "Every team's game plan against Bismarck concentrates on him, first and foremost. He is a great scorer but what sets him apart is his ability to set up his teammates and find the open man."

Werner has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at North Dakota 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.

Two-time winner Werner joins Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Players of the Year Nik Savageau (2009-10, Fargo North), Joe Hanstad (2008-09, Dickinson High School), Austin Dufault (2007-08, Killdeer High School), and Tate Kick (2006 - 07, Dickinson) 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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