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**TAFT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Adolphus Washington of Taft High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Washington is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Taft 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 Washington as Ohio'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, Washington 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, 240-pound senior center and power forward averaged 23.1 points, 14.3 rebounds, 1.6 assists and 1.5 blocks per game this past season, leading the Senators (19-4) to the Division II quarterfinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Washington was named the 2012 Cincinnati Metro Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

Washington has maintained a 3.07 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and in association with food and clothing drives for needy area families.

"I cannot say enough about the talent level, class and sportsmanship of Adolphus Washington," said Bryan Wyant, head coach at Hughes High. "We have competed against him for the last three years and he is by far the most difficult player to prepare for. He has also always conducted himself on the court in a first class manner."

Washington has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on an athletic scholarship at The Ohio 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.

Washington joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Players of the Year Travis Trice (2010-11, Wayne High School), Jordan Sibert (2009-10, Princeton), C.J. McCollum (2008-09, GlenOak High School), B.J. Mullens (2007-08, Canal Winchester High School), and Jon Diebler (2006-07, Upper Sandusky) 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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