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Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Jarell Lawson of Central High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Lawson is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Central 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 Lawson as Rhode Island'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, Lawson 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-4 senior guard and forward led the Knights to a 19-4 record and the Open State Tournament championship this past season. Lawson averaged 19.0 points, 10.9 rebounds, 2.0 blocks, 1.5 assists and 1.0 steals per game. A unanimous First Team All-Division I selection, Lawson was a Rhode Island Basketball Coaches Association All-Star. He recorded 16 points, 12 rebounds, three assists, two steals and two blocks in the state-title win over Hope High.

Lawson has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and a youth basketball coach.

"Jarell Lawson can play any position on the floor," said Jim Champion, head coach at South Kingstown High. "He helped bring the ball up, was a constant threat from the 3-point line and could drive or pull up for a jumper. He also could post down low and score inside. He was very well-rounded."

Lawson remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Lawson joins Two-time winner Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Players of the Year Michael Carter-Williams (2009-10 & 2010-11, St. Andrew's School), Jay Jeannotte (2008-09, Narragansett High School), Ashton Watkins (2007-08, Classical High School), and Rakim Sanders (2006-07, St. Andrew's School) 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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