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**NORTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TENNESSEE 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 Alex Poythress of Northeast High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Poythress is the first Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Northeast 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 Poythress as Tennessee'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, Poythress 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, 225-pound senior forward averaged 28.2 points, 11.1 rebounds, 4.3 blocks, 1.9 assists and 1.4 steals per game this past season, leading the Eagles (28-3) to the Class AAA, Region 5 tournament quarterfinals. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, Poythress was the state's 2012 Class AAA Mr. Basketball and a two-time Class 10-AAA District Player of the Year. He concluded his prep basketball career with 2,065 points.

Poythress has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of the National Technical Honor Society, he has volunteered locally as a mentor to Northeast High freshmen, as a mentor and aide to a special-needs student and as a youth basketball coach.

"Alex Poythress is phenomenal. I have been coaching for 17 years and he is the best player my teams have ever faced," said Johnny Jackson, head coach at Rossvie High. "He is so strong. He can put it on the floor, shoot the 3-ball. He elevates so quickly and so high. He is an NBA lottery pick in two years."

Poythress has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky beginning 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.

Poythress joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Players of the Year Adonis Thomas (2010-11, Melrose High School), Joe Jackson (2009-10, White Station), John Jenkins (2008-09, Station Camp High School), Leslie McDonald (2007-08, Briarcrest Christian School), and Maurice Miller (2006-07, Raleigh-Egypt) 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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