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**SHEBOYGAN LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® WISCONSIN BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 22, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Sam Dekker of Sheboygan Lutheran High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Dekker is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sheboygan Lutheran 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 Dekker as Wisconsin'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, Dekker 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, 215-pound senior wing has led the Crusaders to a 25-4 record and the Division 5 state championship this past season. Dekker amassed 40 points on 16-for-28 shooting, including the game-winning 3-pointer in the final seconds, to go along with 13 rebounds and three blocks in the 67-66, title-clinching victory against Racine Lutheran High. Named Mr. Basketball by the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association, he averaged 32.5 points, 13.2 rebounds, 3.3 assists, 2.3 blocks and 1.6 steals per game. Dekker shot 58.7 percent from the field, 35.9 percent from 3-point range and 71.9 percent from the free throw line. He concluded his career with 2,629 points, ranked fourth in state history.

Dekker has maintained a 3.57 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor and referee, he has volunteered locally on behalf of his church, the Special Olympics and the National Honor Society.

"He can play the 1 or the 5, and play them well," said Isaiah Ketterhagen, head coach at Ozaukee High. "Sam has such nice ball-handling, long-range, mid-range and post shots that he was impossible to stop. His body control is remarkable because he goes extremely hard and is such a large body, but he can change speed and direction remarkably well. He's got it all. I'm excited that he gets to move on and play basketball against someone else!"

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

Dekker joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Players of the Year Paul Jespersen (2010-11, Merrill High School), Josh Gasser (2009-10, Port Washington), Ben Averkamp (2008-09, Germantown High School), Kwamain Mitchell (2007-08, Dominican High School), and Tim Jarmusz (2006-07, Oshkosh West) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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