

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**SPRINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 15, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Nelson Landaverde of Springdale High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Landaverde is the first Gatorade Arkansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Springdale 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 field, distinguishes Landaverde as Arkansas's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Landaverde joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8, 150-pound senior midfielder has led the Bulldogs to an 18-1 record and a berth in the Class 7A state final against Little Rock Catholic High, scheduled for May 18. Landaverde scored six goals and passed for 13 assists through 19 games. The 7A West Conference Most Valuable Player, Landaverde is a two-time Class 7A First Team All-State selection and a four-year starter.

Landaverde has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit ALS research and has served as a youth soccer coach and mentor.

"Nelson Landaverde is the leader of their team," said Ryan Lawrence, head coach of rival Little Rock Catholic High. "He dictates the game for Springdale. It sounds funny, but it's like he has a remote control. He takes the game from left to right, speeds things up and slows it down, and the other players follow his lead."

Landaverde 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.

Landaverde joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Boys Soccer Players of the Year William Hidalgo (2010-11, Cabot High School), John Lung'aho, (2009-10, Parkview Arts/Science Magnet), Taylor Hart (2008-09, Conway High School), Stephen Maxwell (2007-08, Conway), and Jeff Chacko (2006-2007, Catholic for Boys) 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.

###