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**AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL OF BOCA/DELRAY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 Brian James of American Heritage School of Boca/Delray as its 2011-12 Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Player of the Year. James is the fourth Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from American Heritage School of Boca/Delray.

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 James as Florida'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, James 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-11, 140-pound senior midfielder scored 24 goals and passed for 55 assists this past season, leading the Stallions to the Class 2A state semifinals. A 2011 ESPNHS First Team All-American selection and a two-time Palm Beach Post Player of the Year, James has been a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Men's National Team player pool. He concluded his prep soccer career with 78 goals and 168 assists.

James has maintained a weighted 4.52 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at a retirement home, as a youth soccer coach and on behalf of the Easter Seals.

"Brian is the difference-maker on most teams he plays on," said Jerry Willenborg, the director of the Weston FC club team. "He plays harder when the team is down, he usually scores game-winners and he is very focused on his game."

James has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

James joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Soccer Players of the Year Verner Valimaa (2010-11, American Heritage School of Boca/Delray), Max Rockwell, (2009-10, JW Mitchell), Hasani Sinclair (2008-09, American Heritage School of Boca/Delray), Shawn Barry (2007-08, American Heritage School), and Eugene Starikov (2006-2007, Palm Harbor University) 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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