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**VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 Eric Williams of Valley High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Williams is the second Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Valley 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 Williams as Iowa'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, Williams 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-10, 185-pound senior forward has led the Tigers to a 12-5 record entering this week's regular-season finale against Mason City High, scheduled for May 14. Williams scored 10 goals and passed for 10 assists during the team's first 17 games. A 2011 Second Team All-State selection and a two-time First Team All-Central Iowa Metropolitan Conference honoree, he entered the final game of the regular season with 37 goals and 22 assists in his prep soccer career.

Williams has maintained a 3.31 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at an area homeless shelter, as a youth academic tutor and as a youth soccer coach.

"We played against Eric Williams and he had the game-winning goal—basically out of nothing," said Steve Robertson, head coach of rival Kennedy High. "He is strong, fast and a finisher. Last year in the state quarterfinals, he scored two goals on us in the first 10 minutes and took our defense apart all game long."

Williams has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on an athletic scholarship at Drake University 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Soccer Players of the Year Gabe Christianson (2010-11, Kennedy High School), Erik Boyer, (2009-10, Kennedy), Husref Jupic (2008-09, Hoover High School), Hunter Kennedy (2007-08, Washington), and Charlie Schwartz (2006-2007, Bettendorf) 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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