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**UNION HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Cristian Mata of Union High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Mata is the third Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Union 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 Mata as Oklahoma'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, Mata 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-9 senior forward scored 22 goals and passed for eight assists this past season, leading the Redskins (13-2-1) to the Class 6A state championship game and a No. 11 national ranking in the ESPNHS Fab 50. Mata is a three-time All-District selection and a two-time member of the Tulsa All-Metro Team.

Mata has maintained a 3.10 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs and camps.

"Mata is phenomenal," said Craig Liddell, head coach at Enid High. "He's so clever with the ball, and he's a great finisher. He's a real difference-maker."

Mata has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Tulsa 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.

Mata joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Soccer Players of the Year Will Smith (2010 - 11, Norman North High School), Omar Mata, (2009-10, Union), Jack Coleman (2008-09 Norman North High School), Thomas Shannon (2007-08, Broken Arrow Senior), and Jonathan Gann (2006-2007, Union) 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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