

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)

**GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 22, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Ian Harkes of Gonzaga College High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Harkes is the sixth Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gonzaga College 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 Harkes as District of Columbia'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, Harkes 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, 155-pound junior forward and midfielder scored 16 goals and passed for 10 assists this past season, leading the Eagles (12-4-2) to a runner-up finish in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference tournament. A 2011 Washington Post First Team All-Met selection, Harkes was a First Team All-WCAC selection. The son of former U.S. National Team player John Harkes, he concluded his junior year with 20 goals and 20 assists in his prep career.

Harkes has maintained a weighted 3.92 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach, at an area homeless shelter and with Athletes for Hope, a philanthropic organization.

"Besides being technically gifted, Ian Harkes is one of the more intelligent players in the region," said Tom Torres, Harkes' club coach with D.C. United. "He plays with vision and is able to read the game a couple steps ahead of opponents."

Harkes will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Harkes joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Joey Wilkins (2010 - 11, Gonzaga College High School), Ben Norton, (2009-10, Sidwell Friends School), Chris Perez (2008-09 Gonzaga College) and Yoni Berhanu (2007-08, Sidwell Friends School) 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.

###