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## **GRAND BLANC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE MICHIGAN BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 22, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Zach Carroll of Grand Blanc High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Carroll is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Grand Blanc 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 Carroll as Michigan'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, Carroll 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 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior defender scored eight goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Bobcats (17-5) to the Division 1, Region 4 semifinals. The 2011 National Soccer Coaches Association of America National High School Player of the Year, Carroll was the Michigan Soccer Coaches Association's Mr. Soccer. He was also a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-17 Men's National Team that participated in the FIFA U-17 World Cup last summer. Carroll concluded his prep soccer career with 33 goals and 30 assists.

Carroll has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives on behalf of the Grand Blanc High National Honor Society.

"Zach Carroll is an imposing figure," said Brian O'Leary, head coach of Novi High. "His size and strength make it so he wins every 50-50 ball in the air or on the ground. He is impossible to beat one on one and with the ball he goes by players with ease. Carroll is on another level than every player in this state."

Carroll has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on 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.

Carroll joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Soccer Players of the Year Dzenan Catic (2010 - 11, East Kentwood High School), Soony Saad, (2009-10, Dearborn High School), Kevin Cope (2008-09 Salem), and Casey Townsend (2007-08, 2006-2007, Traverse City West) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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