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**SAYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 Dakota Edwards of Sayville High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Edwards is the first Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Sayville 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 Edwards as New York'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, Edwards 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 senior defender scored 8 goals and passed for 12 assists this past season, leading the Golden Flashes (14-3-1) to the Suffolk County finals. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Edwards is also the NSCAA New York Player of the Year, the Long Island Player of the Year and a two-time All-State honoree.

Edwards has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of an area soup kitchen and youth soccer programs.

"He's imposing physically, he's very good in the air and he has a real understanding of the game," said Matt Allen, head coach of Byram Hills High. "He's very physical, but he's smart too. Without question, he's the best defensive player that I've seen."

Edwards has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Edwards joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Soccer Players of the Year Timothy Parker (2010 - 11, Hicksville High School), Alex Bramall, (2009-10, Newburgh Free Academy), Brian Rogers (2008-09 Bronxville), Will Ogden (2007-08, Byram Hills) and Wilber Bonilla (2006-2007, Brentwood) 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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