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**CLOVIS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (November 29, 2012) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Kamal Cass of Clovis High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year. Cass is the fourth Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Clovis 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 Cass as New Mexico's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Cass joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 5-foot-11, 166-pound junior running back rushed for 2,580 yards and 36 touchdowns on 314 carries this past season, leading the Wildcats (6-6) to the Class 5A state quarterfinals. Cass also caught 14 passes for 290 yards and two scores and returned four punts for touchdowns. He rushed for at least 200 yards in seven games and scored multiple rushing touchdowns in 10 of his team's 12 games.

Cass has maintained a B average in the classroom. Having appeared in an acting role as part of local performances of Huck Finn and the Nutcracker, he is also a junior deacon at his church. Cass has also volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and as a youth football coach.

"Kamal Cass is a good-sized kid, but runs even harder than his stature," said Chad Adcox, head coach of Manzano High. "He can be physical but also can kill you with his speed. Against us, he ran for one touchdown and returned a punt for a touchdown. He is a dangerous player."

Cass will begin his senior year of high school next 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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with USA TODAY High School Sports, 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.

Cass joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Football Players of the Year Cole Gautsche (2011-12, Cleveland High School), Ryan Trujillo (2010-11, Manzano High School), Ronnie Daniels (2009-10, La Cueva), Troy Harris (2008-09, Rio Rancho High School) and Landry Jones (2007-08, Artesia) 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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