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**WEST ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® OREGON FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (November 29, 2012) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jake LaCoste of West Albany High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Oregon Football Player of the Year. LaCoste is the first Gatorade Oregon Football Player of the Year to be chosen from West Albany 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 LaCoste as Oregon's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, LaCoste 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-10, 180-pound junior running back rushed for 2,741 yards and 38 touchdowns on 277 carries this past season, leading the Bulldogs (9-2) to the Class 4A quarterfinals. A First Team All-State selection, LaCoste rushed for a season-high 346 yards in a win over Corvallis on Oct. 26 and scored at least three touchdowns in a game nine times in 2012.

LaCoste has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of a homeless shelter in addition to donating his time as a youth football coach and as part of multiple school fundraisers.

"Jake LaCoste is by far the best player we faced this season," said Charlie Hall, head coach at Ashland High. "The thing that makes him impressive is that defenses scheme to stop him and they still come up short. He has an excellent combination of speed and power that makes him hard to contain."

LaCoste 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.

LaCoste joins recent Gatorade Oregon Football Players of the Year Steven Long (2011-12, Lake Oswego High School), Brett Smith (2010-11, West Salem High School), Jordan Johnson (2009-10, Sheldon), Jack Lomax (2008-09, Lake Oswego High School) and Cory McCaffrey (2007-08, Sisters) 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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