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**LA SALLE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Anthony Francis of La Salle Academy as its 2012-13 Gatorade Rhode Island Football Player of the Year. Francis is the sixth Gatorade Rhode Island Football Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Francis as Rhode Island's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Francis 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 6-foot-1, 193-pound senior quarterback has led the Rams to a 9-1 record and a berth in the Division I state semifinals against Portsmouth High, scheduled for Nov. 28. At the time of his selection, Francis had passed for 2,013 yards and 18 touchdowns, completing 110-of-181 attempts while throwing just two interceptions. A 2011 Providence Journal First Team All-State honoree, he rushed for 633 yards and nine touchdowns on 116 carries through 10 games.

Francis has maintained a B average in the classroom. A member of the La Salle Academy Debate Team, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a day care center, at a homeless shelter and as a youth football coach.

"With Anthony this year it is like having a young coach on the field," said Geoff Marcone, head coach of La Salle Academy. "Anthony knows the offense so well we have given him authority to check in and out of plays. He is the guy that makes the call."

Francis remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Francis joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Football Players of the Year Josh Morris (2011-12, La Salle Academy), Ben Willett (2010-11, Portsmouth High School), Mike Read (2009-10, Barrington), Dave D'Errico (2008-09, North Kingstown High School) and Bobby Bentsen (2007-08, Warwick Veterans) 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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