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**GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Ryan Switzer of George Washington High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year. Switzer is the first Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from George Washington 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 Switzer as West Virginia's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Switzer 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, 175-pound senior running back and cornerback rushed for 2,403 yards and 36 touchdowns on 192 carries this past season, leading the Patriots (11-3) to the Class AAA semifinals. The 2011-12 Gatorade West Virginia Football player of the Year, Switzer also caught 20 passes for 253 yards with five touchdowns.

Switzer has maintained a 3.50 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and in association with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"We wouldn't be where we are without Ryan Switzer," said George Washington High head coach Steve Edwards. "He's a true competitor and a leader on and off the field."

Switzer has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of North Carolina beginning in the fall of 2013.

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.

Switzer joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Football Players of the Year Keion Wright (2010-11, Capital High School), Allan Wasonga (2009-10, Parkersburg), Aaron Slusher (2008-09, South Charleston High School) and Josh Jenkins (2007-08, Parkersburg) 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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