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**CHANDLER PARK ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MICHIGAN BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 21, 2013) — 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 Derrick Walton Jr. of Chandler Park Academy as its 2012-13 Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Walton Jr. is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Chandler Park 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 court, distinguishes Walton Jr. as Michigan's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Walton Jr. joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-1, 190-pound senior point guard averaged 26.2 points, 10.1 assists, 7.7 rebounds and 5.4 steals while shooting 80.7 percent from the free throw line this past season, leading the Eagles (20-4) to the Class B regional semifinals. A First Team All-State selection, Walton scored a season-high 40 points in a win over Rogers High (Toledo, Oh) and scored at least 20 points in all but four games this season.

Walton has maintained a 3.5 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with the National Honor Society, in addition to serving as a youth basketball coach.

"Derrick Walton's work ethic and determination is absolutely phenomenal," said Chandler Park athletic director John Jergovich. "He's here every morning at 6 a.m. before school starts taking shots and working on his game. He's a go-getter on and off the court. Once he sets his goals, both athletically and academically, he'll do anything to reach them."

Walton has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Michigan 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 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.

Walton Jr. joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Players of the Year Matt Costello (2011-12 & 2010-11, Bay City Western High School), Ray McCallum (2009-10 & 2008-09, Detroit Country Day School), Brad Redford (2007-08, Frankenmuth High School), and Corperryale 'Manny' Harris (2006 - 07, Redford) 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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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