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**AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® FLORIDA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 5, 2013) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sony Michel of American Heritage School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year. Michel is the first Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year to be chosen from American Heritage 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 Michel as Florida's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Michel 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, 205-pound senior running back has led the Patriots to a 12-1 record entering the Class 5A state semifinals, scheduled for Dec. 6. A U.S. Army Player of the Year Award nominee, Michel rushed for 1,602 yards and 18 touchdowns on 186 carries in addition to hauling in nine catches for 237 yards and three touchdowns entering the postseason final four. He rushed for 1,258 yards and 18 touchdowns on 127 carries as a junior, capturing 2012 Class 5A First Team All-State honors.

Michel has maintained a 3.88 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has donated his time as a mentor and anti-bullying advocate for younger student-athletes in the community.

"Sony's consistency over the last four years at American Heritage has stood out to me, because it's hard to be so good for so long," said American Heritage head coach Mike Rumph. "Sony is also very humble and doesn't let the fame get to his head."

Michel has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Georgia beginning in the fall of 2014.

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.

Michel joins recent Gatorade Florida Football Players of the Year Derrick Henry (2012-2013, Yulee High School), William Likely (2011-12, Glades Central High School), Jeff Driskel (2010-11, Paul J. Hagerty High School), Matt Elam (2009-10, William T. Dwyer), Jacobbi McDaniel (2008-09, Madison County High School) and Brandon Harris (2007-08, Booker T. Washington) 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.

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