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Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**GLENBARD NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 Justin Jackson of Glenbard North High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year. Jackson is the first Gatorade Illinois Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Glenbard North 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 Jackson as Illinois's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Jackson 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 state's returning Gatorade Football Player of the Year, Jackson rushed for 3,171 yards and 38 touchdowns on 348 carries this past season, leading the Panthers (9-2) to the second round of the Class 8A state playoffs. The 6-foot, 180-pound senior running back became only the sixth player in state history to eclipse 3,000 rushing yards in a single season. He also hauled in 16 catches for 220 yards and a touchdown. As a defensive back, Jackson recorded 36 tackles, including nine for losses, to go along with nine pass breakups and three interceptions. He rushed for 2,612 yards and 35 touchdowns on 421 carries as a junior during Glenbard North's run to the 2012 Class 8A state championship game.

Jackson has maintained a 4.90 weighted GPA on a 5.0 scale in the classroom. In addition to serving as a member of his school's French Club, he has volunteered as a youth basketball coach.

"Justin Jackson is the total package," said Ron Muhitch, head coach at rival Wheaton Warrenville South High. "He is a great competitor, a great student, and a great ambassador for a student-athlete qualified and going to Northwestern. He's a team player for Glenbard North as a two-way player. A classy kid, great character and leader for our conference."

Jackson has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at Northwestern University 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.

Two-time winner Jackson joins Gatorade Illinois Football Players of the Year Blake Winkler (2011-12, Lincoln-Way East High School), Reilly O'Toole (2010-11, Wheaton Warrenville South High School), Christian Lombard (2009-10, William Fremd), Chris Watt (2008-09, Glenbard West High School) and Steve Filer (2007-08, Mount Carmel) 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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