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**MADISON SOUTHERN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KENTUCKY 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 Damien Harris of Madison Southern High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year. Harris is the first Gatorade Kentucky Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Madison Southern 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 Harris as Kentucky's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Harris 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 junior running back rushed for 2,621 yards and 42 touchdowns on 220 carries this past season, leading the Eagles to a 10-2 record and the Class 5A quarterfinals. A MaxPreps sophomore All-American, Harris was also the District Player of the Year and a Courier-Journal Second Team All-State selection. He is rated as the nation's No. 20 recruit in the Class of 2015 by ESPN.

Harris has maintained a B average in the classroom. A devoted member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football camps and drug awareness initiatives.

"Damien Harris is the best running back I've seen in 18 years as a head coach in Kentucky," said Mike Settles, head coach at Lincoln County High. "His combination of strength, speed and work ethic is tremendous."

Harris will begin his senior year of high school next 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.

Harris joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Football Players of the Year James Quick (2012-2013, Trinity High School), Patrick Towles (2011-12, Highlands High School), Lamar Dawson (2010-11, Boyle County High School), Antonio Andrews (2009-10, Fort Campbell), Rolandan "Deuce" Finch (2008-09, St. Xavier High School) and John Cole (2007-08, Somerset) 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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