

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MICHIGAN 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 Travis Smith of Ithaca High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Ithaca 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 Smith as Michigan's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Smith 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 6-foot-2, 193-pound senior quarterback led the Yellow Jackets (14-0) to a fourth consecutive Division 6 state championship this past season. Also the Michigan High School Player of the Year as named by MLive.com, Smith threw for 3,278 yards and 42 touchdowns against just seven interceptions on 188-of-264 passing (71.2 percent). A returning Division 5-6 First Team All-State selection, he rushed for 640 yards and 10 touchdowns on 91 carries in 2013. In the 41-22, title-clinching win over Clinton, Smith completed 17 of 27 attempts for 247 yards and four touchdowns in addition to rushing for 137 yards and a score on 16 carries. He concluded his career with a state-record 104 touchdown passes, leading Ithaca to 56 consecutive wins, the nation's longest active streak.

Also a basketball standout, Smith has maintained a 3.30 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth football instructor, he has volunteered locally as part of a literacy-outreach program and as a mentor to elementary school students.

"Travis Smith is one of the best football players I have ever seen," said Greg Wasmer, head coach at rival Carrollton High. "I have coached high school and college football for over 20 years. He is a great leader, teammate and competitor. He has always competed with class and integrity, never one to boast about his accomplishments. He is first to credit his teammate and opponents for games well played. Travis has never lost a high school football game as a starter, and he is also a great person of character off the field."

Smith has verbally committed to play football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Toledo 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Michigan Football Players of the Year Mark Chapman (2012-2013, Port Huron High School), Cooper Rush (2011-12, Lansing Catholic High School), Valdez Showers (2010-11, Madison High School), Jason Fracassa (2009-10, Stevenson), Joe Glendening (2008-09, East Grand Rapids High School) and Mike Martin (2007-08, Detroit Catholic Central) 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.

###