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**MORGANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Chazzy Thomas of Morgantown High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year. Thomas is the third Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Morgantown 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 Thomas as West Virginia's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Thomas 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-9, 175-pound senior running back rushed for 2,108 yards and 30 touchdowns on 174 carries this past season, leading the Mohigans (8-3) to the first round of the Class AAA playoffs. The 2012 First Team All-State selection, Thomas rushed for more than 7,500 yards in his prep career and averaged a touchdown once every 5.8 times he touched the ball in 2013.

Thomas has maintained a B average in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a youth football coach.

"Chazzy Thomas is a gifted athlete on the field and a better person off of it," said Morgantown High head coach John Bowers. "He's dealt with so many nagging injuries and adversity but he never stops battling. He is a true warrior."

Thomas remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Thomas joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Football Players of the Year Ryan Switzer (2012-2013 & 2011-12, George Washington High School), Keion Wright (2010-11, Capital High School), Allan Wasonga (2009-10, Parkersburg), Aaron Slusher (2008-09, South Charleston High School) and Josh Jenkins (2007-08, Parkersburg) 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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