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**SAGUARO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 4, 2014) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Christian Kirk of Saguaro High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year. Kirk is the fourth Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Saguaro 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 Kirk as Arizona's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Kirk 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, 195-pound senior running back, wide receiver and defensive back led the Sabercats to a 14-0 record and a second straight Division III state title this past season. Kirk rushed for 1,692 yards and 25 touchdowns on 159 carries, averaging 10.6 yards per rush, and hauled in 61 passes for 1,187 yards and 17 touchdowns. On defense, he recorded four interceptions, returning two for TDs, and collected 29 tackles in addition to two blocked field goals. A Preseason American Family Insurance All-USA Football Team selection as named by USA TODAY, Kirk also returned a punt and a kickoff for scores. He concluded his prep football career with state records in total touchdowns (102), receptions (203), receiving yards (3,943) and receiving touchdowns (52).

Kirk has maintained a 3.39 GPA in the classroom. A mentor to middle school students, he has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank in addition to serving as a youth football coach.

"What makes Christian so special is that he plays all over the place," said Travis Schureman, head coach of Queen Creek High. "Usually when you have a guy like him you only have to worry about game-planning for one side of the ball. With him you have to game plan for all aspects of the game. He plays great defense, returns punts and is all over on offense."

Kirk 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.

Kirk joins recent Gatorade Arizona Football Players of the Year Luke Rubenzer (2013-14, Saguaro High School), Jalen Brown (2012-13, Mountain Pointe High School), Davonte Neal (2011-12 & 2010-11, Chaparral High School), Brett Hundley (2009-10, Chandler), Craig Roh (2008-09, Chaparral High School) and Tim Ruben (2007-08, Saguaro) 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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