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**RALSTON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® COLORADO 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 Andrew Wingard of Ralston Valley High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year. Wingard is the first Gatorade Colorado Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Ralston Valley 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 Wingard as Colorado's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Wingard 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, 175-pound senior running back and defensive back rushed for 1,653 yards and 28 touchdowns on 190 carries this past season, leading the Mustangs (12-1) to the Class 5A state semifinals. Wingard caught 37 passes for 393 yards and five touchdowns and returned three kickoffs and one punt for scores. On defense, the two-time First Team All-JeffCo Conference selection recorded 96 tackles, three interceptions and forced a fumble.

Wingard has maintained a weighted 3.31 GPA in the classroom. A member of his local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, he has volunteered as a youth football and basketball coach in addition to donating his time gathering football equipment for a Nebraska-based youth football team in need.

"Andrew Wingard made a huge impact for Ralston Valley this year," said Andy Lowry, head coach of Columbine High. "His speed, toughness and strength separate him from other running backs."

Wingard has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Wyoming in the fall of 2015.

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.

Wingard joins recent Gatorade Colorado Football Players of the Year Christian McCaffrey (2013-14 & 2012-13, Valor Christian High School), Joe Hansley (2011-12, Highlands Ranch High School), Jaleel Awini (2010-11, Rangeview High School), Austin Hinder (2009-10, Steamboat Springs), Bryan Peters (2008-09, Rocky Mountain High School) and Jon Major (2007-08, Ponderosa) 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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