

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 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 Richie Petitbon of Gonzaga College High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade District of Columbia Football Player of the Year. Petitbon is the sixth Gatorade District of Columbia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Gonzaga College 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 Petitbon as District of Columbia's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Petitbon 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-4, 320-pound tackle has led the Eagles to a 9-3 record and a berth in the finals of the District of Columbia State Athletic Association AA championship game against H.D. Woodson, scheduled for Dec. 6. Petitbon has recorded 58 pancake blocks through 12 games and helped pave the way for a Gonzaga offense averaging 32.5 points and 338 yards per game. A two-time First Team All-Conference selection, he is ranked as the nation's No. 35 recruit in the Class of 2015 by Rivals.com, and has been chosen to play in the 2015 Under Armour All-America Game.

Petitbon has maintained a 3.16 GPA in the classroom. Also a lacrosse standout, he has raised funds to benefit cancer research and the Special Olympics in addition to volunteering locally on behalf of youth football and lacrosse programs.

"He's just a massive young man who is dominant up front," said Keith Goganious, head coach at Bishop McNamara High. "He's good with run blocking and pass blocking and he's very aggressive at the point of attack."

Petitbon has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Alabama beginning 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.

Petitbon joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Football Players of the Year D'Andre Payne (2013-14, H.D. Woodson High School), Yannick Ngakoue (2012-13, Friendship Collegiate Academy), Albert Reid (2011-12, Friendship Collegiate Academy), Kevin Hogan (2010-11, Gonzaga College High School), Ricardo Young (2009-10, HD Woodson), Darin Drakeford (2008-09, Roosevelt High School) and Antwon Bailey (2007-08, St. John's College) 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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