

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**COLUMBUS EAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® INDIANA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 4, 2014) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Markell Jones of Columbus East High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year. Jones is the second Gatorade Indiana Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Columbus East 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 Jones as Indiana's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Jones 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-10, 200-pound senior running back rushed for 3,536 yards on 312 carries and 60 touchdowns this past season, leading the Olympians (13-1) to the Class 4A semifinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Jones's rushing and scoring totals this fall set Indiana High School Athletic Association single-season state records. His 7,793 career rushing yards rank second in state history.

Jones has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom. He has served as a leader in his school's student spirit group in addition to volunteering as a youth football coach.

"Markell Jones is the most impressive athlete I have coached against in my 11 years of coaching," said Dustin Roller, head coach at Jennings County High. "His athletic ability is second to none and he has the strength and power to run through players larger than him and the speed to pull away from skill positions. He is humble, respectful and always aware of the gifts he has been given and the responsibility that comes with them."

Jones has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Purdue University 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.

Jones joins recent Gatorade Indiana Football Players of the Year Sammy Mireles (2013-14, Elwood Community High School), Sam Schrader (2012-13, Mishawaka High School), Gunner Kiel (2011-12, Columbus East High School), Matt McIntosh (2010-11, F.J. Reitz High School), Kofi Hughes (2009-10, Cathedral), Morgan Newton (2008-09, Carmel High School) and Paul McIntosh (2007-08, F.J. Reitz) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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