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**HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Luke Loudenburg of Howard High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year. Loudenburg is the first Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Howard 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 Loudenburg as South Dakota's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Loudenburg 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-5, 150-pound senior running back led the Tigers to a perfect 12-0 record and the Class 9A state title this past season. Loudenburg rushed for 2,685 yards and 53 touchdowns on 200 carries, and shattered the state career records for both rushing yards (6,806) and touchdowns (108). Captain of the Argus Leader Elite 45 team, he rushed for 227 yards and three scores in the state title game, earning the Joe Robbie Award.

Loudenburg has maintained a 3.56 GPA in the classroom. Also a state championship wrestler, he has volunteered locally assisting the elderly and coaching youth football players and wrestlers.

"Pound for pound, Loudenburg is the toughest football player I've ever seen," said Brad Benson, head coach at Chester Area School. "He's got great vision, great balance, great feet. He's also a great defensive player, a great tackler."

Loudenburg 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.

Loudenburg joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Football Players of the Year Caden Quintanilla (2013-14, Lincoln High School), Cole Langer (2012-13, Dell Rapids High School), Alex Schultz (2011-12, Lincoln High School), Matt Hermanson (2010-11, Washington High School), Austin Sumner (2009-10, Brandon Valley), Dustin Lotzer (2008-09, Sisseton High School) and Riley Reiff (2007-08, Parkston) 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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