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**BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 3, 2015) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ethan Falaniko of Bartlett High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year. Falaniko is the first Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Bartlett 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 Falaniko as Alaska's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Falaniko 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, 220-pound senior running back and linebacker rushed for 2,053 yards on 207 carries and 33 touchdowns this past season, leading the Golden Bears (6-3) to the Large School quarterfinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, he set a single-game school record on Sept. 19 when he scampered for 351 yards in a 50-31 win over Nikiski.

Falaniko has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, a student government representative and a devoted parishioner of his church community, he is a talented vocalist in his school's swing choir ensemble.

"Not only is Ethan Falaniko an incredible player, he is also an excellent student and one of the best kids I have ever met," said Roger Spackman, head coach at Chugiak High. "He is the most complete and impressive student athlete I can remember for many years in our state."

Falaniko 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.

Falaniko joins recent Gatorade Alaska Football Players of the Year Anthony Griffith (2014-15, Ben Eielson High School), Leroy Elliott (2013-14, West Anchorage High School), Conor Feckley (2012-13, West Anchorage High School), A.J. Hull (2011-12, Kenai Central High School), Robbie Smithwick (2010-11, Soldotna High School), Justin Kauffman (2009-10, West Anchorage High School), Anthony Griglione (2008-09, Soldotna High School) and Bill Chimphalee (2007-08, Kenai Central High School) 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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