

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3556)

**SUE CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 Gabe Ortega of Sue Cleveland High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year. Ortega is the second Gatorade New Mexico Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Sue Cleveland 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 Ortega as New Mexico's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Ortega 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-2, 190-pound senior quarterback and free safety has led the Storm to a 12-0 record and a berth in the Class 6A state championship game against Eldorado High, scheduled for Dec. 5. At the time of his selection, Ortega had completed 148-of-223 passes for 2,358 yards and 24 touchdowns and rushed for 848 yards and eight scores on 80 carries. On defense, the First-Team All-State kick returner (2013) and First Team All-State punter (2014) had recorded 62 tackles, three interceptions and forced a fumble.

Ortega has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. The president of the Cleveland High chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered locally as an elementary school mentor and youth football coach.

"Gabe's ability to extend plays, scramble out of the pocket and find the open wide receiver make him very difficult to defend," said Chad Adcox, head coach of Manzano High. "And if you don't stay home on the zone read, he will take it to the end zone."

Ortega has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of New Mexico in the fall of 2016.

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.

Ortega joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Football Players of the Year Zach Gentry (2014-15, Eldorado High School), Bo Coleman (2013-14, Valley High School), Kamal Cass (2012-13, Clovis High School), Cole Gautsche (2011-12, Sue Cleveland High School), Ryan Trujillo (2010-11, Manzano High School), Ronnie Daniels (2009-10, La Cueva High School), Troy Harris (2008-09, Rio Rancho High School) and Landry Jones (2007-08, Artesia 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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