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**AQUINAS INSTITUTE STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW YORK 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 Jake Zembiec of Aquinas Institute as its 2015-16 Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year. Zembiec is the second Gatorade New York Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Aquinas Institute.

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 Zembiec as New York's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Zembiec 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-3, 210-pound senior quarterback passed for 3,030 yards and 37 touchdowns this past season, leading the Little Irish to a 13-0 record and the Class AA state championship. Zembiec completed 184-of-269 passes and was intercepted just seven times. The Class AA Player of the Year as a sophomore, he broke Section V single-season and career records for passing yards and touchdowns.

Zembiec has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, school anti-bullying initiatives and Muddy's Buddies, which supports children whose lives have been touched by cancer.

"Zembiec's got great skills and he's a real competitor," said Dennis Gilbert, head coach at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. "His progressions are fast and if you sit back in a zone he'll pick you apart. He's a nightmare to play against."

Zembiec has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Penn State University 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.

Zembiec joins recent Gatorade New York Football Players of the Year Jordan Fredericks (2014-15, Lawrence High School), Curtis Samuel (2013-14, Erasmus Hall High School), Tyler Rouse (2012-13, C.W. Baker High School), Akeel Lynch (2011-12, St. Francis High School), Ishaq Williams (2010-11, Abraham Lincoln High School), Dan Scalo (2009-10, Monroe-Woodbury High School), Miguel Maysonet (2008-09, Riverhead High School) and Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga 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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