

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Phil Marwill, director of communications
Mobile: 917-579-4256
Email: pmarwill@footballfoundation.com



& COLLEGE HALL OF FAME, INC.

NFF ANNOUNCES 2011 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Selected from 400,000 high school football players, five outstanding student-athletes are chosen as the best of the best in the nation for their all-around excellence.

DALLAS, Oct. 18, 2011 - The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF) announced today the five winners of the 2011 NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Awards with each recipient selected as the best of the best from their region of the country at the high school level. The five winners, who are now playing college football, are being recognized solely for their previous accomplishments in high school.

"With the NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Awards, we annually strive to honor the absolute finest from the gridiron at the high school level," said NFF President & CEO **Steven J. Hatchell**. "The accomplishments of this year's five honorees make us all proud, and their contributions both on and off the field set the standard for their peers to follow."

2011 NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Honorees

(Currently freshmen in college, the award is solely based on their high school accomplishments)

Northeast Region

Matt Costello from Everett High School in **Everett, Mass.**, and the NFF Jack Grinold/Eastern Massachusetts Chapter. (Now at Princeton University.)

South Region

Josh Gregory from Davidson Academy in **Goodlettsville, Tenn.**, and the NFF Middle Tennessee Chapter. (Now at Vanderbilt University.)

Midwest Region

Tyler Hamblin from Cretin-Derham Hall in **St. Paul, Minn.**, and NFF Minnesota Chapter. (Now at Columbia University.)

West Region

Connor Loftus from Servite High School in **Anaheim, Calif.**, and the NFF Orange County (Calif.) Chapter. (Now at the University of Pennsylvania.)

East Region

Andrew Weidinger from Lake Braddock Secondary School in **Burke, Va.**, and the NFF National Capital (Va.) Chapter. (Now at the College of William and Mary.)

Selected from the 400,000 high school football players covered by the NFF Chapter Network, the five scholar-athletes will be honored for their high school accomplishments during the NFF Chapter Awards Luncheon Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. First bestowed in 1991, the NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Awards have become one of the most prestigious high school honors in the country. Criteria for the award include but are not limited to academic achievement, athletic accomplishments and leadership in the community.

With 120 outposts and more than 12,000 members, the NFF Chapter Network covers more than 4,800 high schools and 400,000 student-athletes in 47 states, annually analyzing the credentials of the top student-athletes from each of their regions. The chapters subsequently recognize approximately 3,300 of the best scholar-athletes at their local awards banquets, distributing more than \$1 million in scholarships. From this pool of 3,300 scholar-athletes, the chapters nominate a group of finalists, and a national committee makes the final selections of the five winners, one from each region of the country, as the recipients of the NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Awards.

During the past 20 years, 86 student-athletes have been recognized as NFF National High School Scholar-Athletes, and this year marks the 21st class, creating a new total of 91 all-time honorees. Recent notable recipients include **Andrew Luck** (2008, starting quarterback at Stanford), **Andrew Rodriguez** (2008, a starting linebacker at Army and a 2011 semifinalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy), **Jamal-Rashad Patterson** (2009, a wide receiver at Stanford), **Chris Pronski** (a former defensive back at Wyoming and now playing with the Jacksonville Jaguars) and **Bryant Browning** (2006, a former offensive tackle at Ohio State and now on the developmental squad with the Carolina Panthers).

Four NFF National High School Scholar-Athletes have gone on to win NFF National Scholar-Athlete Awards for their accomplishments in college. They are **Bobby Hoying** (1991, Ohio State and the 1995 William V. Campbell Trophy winner), **Eion Hu** (1993, Harvard), **Giovanni Carmazzi** (1995, Hofstra), and **Jon Stinchcomb** (1998, Georgia). Other notable past recipients include **Todd Helton** and **Drew Henson**. Helton was honored in 1992 before playing quarterback at Tennessee, and he currently plays first base for the Colorado Rockies. Henson was honored in 1998 before playing quarterback at Michigan and his subsequent professional football and baseball careers.

For tickets to the NFF Annual Chapter Luncheon in New York on December 6, please contact Ron Dilatush at rdilatush@footballfoundation.com or by calling 972-556-1000. The five recipients of the 2011 NFF Chapter Leadership Awards will also be honored at the event for their extraordinary dedication and efforts in fulfilling the NFF's mission. They are **H. Freeman Belser** (South Region from the Midlands (S.C.) Chapter); **Sean Gothier** (Midwest Region from the Minnesota Chapter); **Stephen Joyce** (East Region from Westchester County (N.Y.) Chapter); **Ed Schluntz** (Northeast Region from the Jack Grinold/Eastern Massachusetts Chapter); and **Dick Whitney** (West Region from the Orange County (Calif.) Chapter).

MATT COSTELLO
EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL – EVERETT, MASS.
NFF JACK GRINOLD/EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

A remarkably focused student-athlete, Matt Costello excelled in all aspects of high school, producing a resume that won universal admiration from his peers, teachers and coaches at Everett High School and throughout Eastern Massachusetts.

“I have had the pleasure of coaching Matt for the past four years,” said Everett head coach **John DiBiasco**. “During this period, Matt has excelled as a player, a student and most of all, as a person. Matt is genuinely a great kid and makes for a perfect recipient of this fine award.”

Costello started three years at wide receiver and defensive back, and he was selected to the *Boston Globe* All-Division Team and All-Scholastic Team. The two time all-league honoree broke a state single-season record with 23 touchdown grabs, and he was named to the Massachusetts State Football Coaches All-State and the *Boston Herald* All-Scholastic teams as a senior. The most prolific receiver in Everett history, he holds school records for receptions and touchdown grabs. He earned honors as the Massachusetts' Gatorade Player of the Year while helping Everett to three consecutive league titles. A Mr. Football nominee by ESPN Boston, Costello played in the Shriners Football Classic, a high school all-star game for players hailing from Eastern Massachusetts.

Claiming a 4.52 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale, Costello graduated sixth out of 385 students at Everett. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Students Initiating Change and the Italian Club. He worked as a peer tutor and spent his summers coaching younger kids at the Everett Recreation Center. He was also an ambassador with the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association. A versatile athlete, Costello also excelled in basketball and baseball, earning all-star honors in both sports and playing on multiple league championships teams.

“Matt’s football credentials speak for themselves,” said NFF Jack Grinold/Eastern Massachusetts Chapter board member **Ed Schluntz**. “Being an All-Scholastic honoree in both Boston papers and also a member of the coaches’ all-state team is an incredible achievement.”

The son of Lenny Parsons and Rachele Costello, he is enrolled at Princeton University and plays wide receiver for the Tigers.

JOSH GREGORY DAVIDSON ACADEMY – GOODLETTSVILLE, TENN. NFF MIDDLE TENNESSEE CHAPTER

Throughout his impressive high school career, Josh Gregory established himself as a versatile student-athlete on the gridiron, in the classroom and in the community. His stellar accomplishments cast a legacy that will long be remembered at Davidson Academy.

Gregory won three letters at Davidson, and he served as team captain during his senior year. A two-way player, Gregory played wide receiver and tight end on offense, and oscillated between cornerback and strong safety on defense. A Wendy’s High School Heisman winner, Gregory was named First Team All-Division II-A and as an All-Region defensive back. He aided the Bears to a 33-14 mark in his three years as a varsity player.

“Josh Gregory is one of the greatest examples of the scholar-athlete that I have coached during my 20-year career,” said Davidson Academy head coach **Bill Alexander**. “He was an emotional leader for us on the field and a peer-elected team captain. He led a state semi-final team in tackles his senior year from the strong safety position and selflessly moved on offense from receiver to fullback and then to a starting role at tight end to help us with an injury situation. He had the opportunity to play on one state championship team and on three other state semi-final teams. His work ethic was a key factor to his success.”

As a senior, Gregory won the Admiral Lawrence Award as the top football scholar-athlete in Middle Tennessee among a group of 56 schools. With a 4.36 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale, Gregory also took home the Murphy Fair Scholar-Athlete Award. He was a four-year member of the Mu

Alpha Theta Honor Society and the Headmaster's List. He was a three-year member of the National Honor Society and the National Junior Honor Society as a freshman. He was chosen as Mr. Davidson Academy as a senior, and he won the AP Scholar Award as a junior. Gregory won the National Latin Exam Gold Medal, and he graduated summa cum laude for all three levels of the course.

As active as Gregory was on the football field, he was possibly more dynamic in the community. President of his senior class, he also headed the Mu Alpha Theta and National Honor Society. He was a four-year member of the Tennessee YMCA in Youth Government Program and the Junior Classical League. He played varsity soccer. His other activities included the Quizbusters team, the chess club, the DA Outdoor Club, the University of Tennessee/Pro2Serve Mathematics Contest, and the Tennessee Math Teachers Association Math Contest. He participated in numerous community service projects, including aiding with Nashville flood relief in 2010 and multiple mission trips to Matamoros, Mexico.

The son of Jim and Kimberly Gregory, he is a freshman at Vanderbilt University and plays defensive back for the Commodores.

TYLER HAMBLIN
CRETIN-DERHAM HALL – ST. PAUL, MINN.
NFF MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Setting a bar that will be difficult to reach, Tyler Hamblin created an exceptional and impressive legacy in the Twin Cities that extends far beyond the accomplishments of all but the most gifted student-athletes. Not just a success athletically and academically, Hamblin is an accomplished author, speaker and performer.

"Tyler was brought up to the varsity in the middle of his sophomore season and from that moment on, neither he nor I ever looked back," said Cretin-Derham Hall head coach Mike Scanlan. "His athletic ability was easy to see but was never his most outstanding quality. Moving on to the varsity as a 10th grader is always a potential train-wreck, yet Tyler immediately earned the respect of his teammates with his humble and hardworking approach. He was never one to seek the spotlight and lacked the usual swagger that accompanies athletic success. He has made an impact in our community, both on and off the field. It is refreshing to find that this unique young man continues to do so no matter where he finds himself."

Hamblin started three years at wide receiver and defensive back while helping the Raiders to a 34-4 mark at the varsity level and a state championship in 2009. In 2010, the team captain was named an all-state player by the Minnesota State High School Football Coaches Association, the Minnesota Associated Press and by the Minnesota Vikings. He was a two-time all-conference player, and he earned Academic All-State honors as a senior.

A member of the National Honor Society, Hamblin posted a 4.42 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. A veritable renaissance man, his extracurricular activities included a starring role as the lead in school's production of "Romeo and Juliet"; playing in the band, primarily as a percussionist; and participating on the school's mock trial team. He served as an emcee and facilitator at the national conference for the National Urban Institute and as an emcee and organizer for the Youth Education Empowerment Conference. A published author, with two children's books to his credit, Hamblin wrote *15 Ways to Get A's* as a high school sophomore and follow-up book *Putting Your A's to Work for Life* as a senior.

A stalwart in the community, Hamblin volunteered at the Cretin-Derham Hall Football Camp and with the Books for Africa program. He was the keynote speaker for the Louisiana Department of Health and Tobacco Free Living, the Statewide Graduation Summit, Operation Reach: New Orleans and the Obama Impact. He is also the president of The Point for Youth.

The son of Ken Hamblin, he is enrolled at Columbia University and plays defensive back for the Lions.

CONNOR LOFTUS
SERVITE HIGH SCHOOL – VILLA PARK, CALIF.
NFF ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

An exceptionally well-rounded student-athlete, Connor Loftus achieved a level of perfection in all his endeavors that led to an impressive list of honors during his high school career.

“Connor Loftus was an outstanding student, athlete, leader and citizen at Servite,” said Servite head coach **Troy Thomas**. “I believe he ended his scholastic career at Servite with only one B on his transcript. He was All-CIF, All-County and All-League as a kicker/punter on the football field. He was involved in our student leadership and chosen as one of eight seniors to lead the school in our student government. He was also strong in his faith as a Catholic. We will miss his leadership, character and talents at Servite, but his legacy is that he taught the young men in his charge a valuable lesson; that it's possible to be great in all that you do.”

A versatile threat, Loftus ranked as one of the best high school kickers and punters in the state of California last year. He connected on 15 field goals and recorded touchbacks on 85 percent of his kickoffs as a senior while collecting First Team All-Trinity League, First Team All-CIF and MaxPreps Second Team All-State honors as a kicker. He was also named First Team All-Orange County and First Team All-State by CalHiSports.com as a punter.

His kicking dominance helped the Friars win Trinity League championships four years in a row with an overall 44-9 record during his high school career. Loftus holds school records for most career field goals (24), highest single-game punting average, longest field goal (53 yards), and he is the only player in school history to make four field goals in one game. His accomplishments produced scholarship offers from Michigan, Boise State, North Carolina, N.C. State, Air Force and Navy.

A Principal's High Honor Roll member for four years, Loftus posted a 4.78 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. Named the school's salutatorian and Scholar-Athlete of the Year, he was a member of the National Honor Society and won the National Mathematics Award from the United States Achievement Academy. A member of the National Society of High School Scholars, he claimed the NFF Orange County Chapter's Paul Schwegler Award for holding the top GPA. The Servite Faculty Mathematics Award winner, he earned recognition as one of the school's top four graduates by the *Orange County Register*.

Loftus donated a significant amount of his time to helping his peers at Servite. He volunteered as a peer tutor; helped incoming freshmen; assisted as a kicking trainer; and worked at the YMCA. Loftus was one of eight members of Priory Leadership, a student-run organization that placed him as a leader of 125 students of all grade levels. He helped raise \$2,500 earmarked for water support in Haiti, and he assembled children's tricycles for needy families at Christmas time.

The son of Edward and Nancy Loftus, he is enrolled in the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania with a spot on the Quakers roster as a kicker.

ANDREW WEIDINGER
LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY SCHOOL – BURKE, VA.
NFF NATIONAL CAPITAL CHAPTER

Andrew Weidinger experienced ultimate success on the gridiron, in the classroom and in the community during his days at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Weidinger proved to be a leader in every activity he endeavored.

“This year choosing the nominee took no effort and caused no debate,” Lake Braddock head coach **James Poythress** said. “I can think of no time when we have been able to nominate the team captain, leading tackler, district player of the year, all-region linebacker and number one student in the class.”

A three-year starter at both linebacker and fullback and team captain his senior year, Weidinger was a cornerstone of the Bruins’ football program. He turned in a stellar senior campaign in 2010, collecting 170 tackles while earning First Team All-District and District Defensive Player of the Year honors. The fourth-ranked linebacker in the state of Virginia, he earned numerous All-Region honors, helping Lake Braddock post a 12-2 record and an appearance in the Division 6 state semifinals. As a junior, he posted 114 tackles, two sacks, seven TFL and one interception. He garnered All-District accolades while pushing the Bruins to a 12-3 record and an appearance in the state finals.

Weidinger earned Valedictorian status for Lake Braddock’s class of 2011 by posting a 4.153 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. A three-year member of the National Honor Society, he earned a 3.5 GPA or higher all eight semesters, and he won the school’s Athletic Scholar Award all four years as well. He was named a Fairfax County Football Hall of Fame Scholarship recipient, and he claimed the Northern Virginia ADACA Thomas J. Porter, Jr. Memorial Scholarship.

A Student Government Association officer, he served as the organization’s historian and managed their canned food drive. He was a member of the Ecumenical Community for Helping Others; a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine teacher for the mentally disabled; a math tutor; and an active member of Holy Spirit Church.

“Another cornerstone to Andrew’s leadership and service commitment is his work with our student government and leadership class,” said Lake Braddock principal **Dave Thomas**. “He understands, appreciates and embraces the importance of service and then seeks opportunities to be a positive influence in his school and his community.”

In addition to winning four letters in football, Weidinger was a three-year starter and two-year captain on the baseball team where he twice earned Second Team All-District and team Defensive MVP honors while pushing the Bruins to consecutive appearances in the state quarterfinals.

The second of eight children, Weidinger is the son of Matthew and Jean Weidinger. He currently plays linebacker at the College of William and Mary.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION & COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Founded in 1947 with early leadership from General Douglas MacArthur, legendary Army coach Earl "Red" Blaik and immortal journalist Grantland Rice, The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame is a non-profit educational organization that runs programs designed to use the power of amateur football in developing scholarship, citizenship and athletic achievement in young people. With 121 chapters and 12,000 members nationwide, NFF programs include the College Football Hall of Fame, the NFF

Scholar-Athlete Awards, presented by Fidelity Investments, Play It Smart, the NFF Hampshire Honor Society, the NFF National Scholar-Athlete Alumni Association, and scholarships of more than \$1.3 million for college and high school scholar-athletes. The NFF presents the MacArthur Bowl, the William V. Campbell Trophy, endowed by HealthSouth, and releases the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) Standings. For more information, please visit www.footballfoundation.org.

###