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**DIMOND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 14, 2010) — In its third decade of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Deanna Nielson of Dimond High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Player of the Year. Nielson is the third Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Dimond 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 court, distinguishes Nielson as Alaska's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Nielson joins an elite alumni association of past state volleyball award winners, including USA Volleyball Olympians Kim Glass (2001-02, Horseshoe HS, Penn.), Kim Willoughby (1998-99, 1999-00, Assumption HS, La.) and Ogonna Nnamani (1999-00, University HS, Ill).

The 6-foot senior right side hitter and setter led the Lynx to a 20-8 record and their third straight Class 4A state title this past season. Nielson recorded 192 assists, 165 digs, 164 kills 30 blocks and 28 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .473. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Nielson amassed 13 digs, 11 kills and six assists in the Class 4A state final against South Anchorage High.

Nielson has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she is also a decorated track and field athlete and has participated in the Anchorage School District Gifted Student Mentoring program.

"Deanna Nielson is a player with huge talent, a great attitude and work ethic," said Judy Knecht, head coach of rival South Anchorage High. "She is extremely versatile and she really turned it on in the state tournament and gave her team everything she had."

Nielson remains undecided upon a college 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Nielson joins recent Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Players of the Year Taylor Adams (2009-10, Dimond), Lauren Fulton (2008-09, Dimond) and Sarah Hibbert (2007-08, South Anchorage) 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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