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**NORTHERN VALLEY REGIONAL H.S. AT OLD TAPPAN STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY 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 Aiyana Whitney of Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan as its 2010-11 Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year. Whitney is the third Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan.

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 Whitney as New Jersey's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Whitney 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-5 senior middle blocker led the Golden Knights to a 26-1 record, the Group III state championship and the Tournament of Champions title this past season. Whitney recorded 381 kills, 121 digs and 46 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .566. A 2010 American Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-American, Whitney was the MVP of the Tournament of Champions, recording 31 kills and 18 digs in two matches.

Whitney has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a peer tutor, a youth volleyball and basketball coach and on behalf of food and clothing drives for area homeless.

"Aiyana Whitney's definitely a whole-gamer," said Beth Powell, head coach of rival Northern Valley Regional High at Demarest. "In the Tournament of Champions final, they're beating Ramapo by 10 points, and she's diving after a loose ball—at no time did you see a lack of effort on her part. She's 6-foot-5 and she can play back row and front row. Anybody would want her on their team."

Whitney has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Penn State University beginning in the fall of 2011.

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.

Whitney joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Players of the Year Ariel Scott (2009-10 & 2008-09, Immaculate Heart Academy) and Amanda Alles (2007-08, Hunterdon Central) 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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