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**APEX HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Kristen Harris of Apex High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year. Harris is the first Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Apex 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 Harris as North Carolina's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Harris 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-2 senior middle blocker led the Cougars to a 27-0 record and the Class 4A state title this past season. Harris recorded 340 kills, 163 digs, 46 service aces and 42 blocks while posting a .587 kill percentage. A two-time First Team All-Conference selection and the 2010 Conference Player of the Year, Harris was chosen as the MVP of the 2010 Class 4A state tournament.

Harris has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has participated in multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group, and has volunteered locally on behalf of Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.).

"Kristen Harris is an all-around class act and an outstanding leader," said Apex Head Coach Nicole O'Donnell. "She exemplifies such qualities as dedication, determination, drive and ambition that allow her to perform at such a high level. Her ability to motivate her teammates to become better players is extraordinary."

Harris has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Elon 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.

Harris joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Players of the Year Madison Bugg (2009-10, Cardinal Gibbons), Andrea Beck (2008-09, Mt. Tabor) and Katie Kabbes (2007-08, Cardinal Gibbons) 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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