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**STEELE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Deme Morales of Steele High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year. Morales is the first Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Steele 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 Morales as Ohio's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Morales 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 5-foot-7 senior middle blocker recorded 549 kills, 283 digs, 88 service aces and 57 blocks this past season while posting a kill percentage of .489 and leading the Comets (24-2) to the first round of the Division I state tournament. A two-time First Team All-State selection and the 2010 Lorain County Miss Volleyball award-winner, Morales was also named the 2010 Southwest Conference Player of the Year.

Morales has maintained a 3.27 GPA in the classroom. A talented and award-winning artist, Morales has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball instructor and camp counselor.

"Deme Morales is the best volleyball player in Ohio," said Mary Anne Souder, head coach of rival Dublin Coffman High. "She is incredibly driven and she was always clearly the best player in the gym. Her defense, hitting, serve receive and serving were all above everyone else."

Morales has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Wisconsin 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.

Morales joins recent Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Players of the Year Dani Reinert (2009-10, Ursuline Academy), Lauren Whyte (2008-09, Olmsted Falls) and Missy Harpenau (2007-08, Mother of Mercy) 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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