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Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MINNESOTA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 2, 2010) — In its third decade of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Eric Kline of Blaine High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year. Kline is the first Gatorade Minnesota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Blaine 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 field, distinguishes Kline as Minnesota's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Kline joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 6-foot-4, 195-pound senior quarterback passed for 2002 yards and 10 touchdowns, completing 156-of-211 attempts while throwing just four interceptions this past season, leading the Bengals (10-1) to the first round of the Class 5A state tournament. The 2010 *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Metro Player of the Year, Kline also rushed for 1,086 yards on 242 carries (4.5) with 24 touchdowns.

Kline has maintained a 3.26 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple peer leadership organizations and as a youth football camp counselor.

"I have seen many great players over the years and Eric Kline is one of the very special ones," said Craig Hansen, head coach of rival Maple Grove High. "Not only is he an extremely talented athlete, but the way he handles himself and works with his teammates is very special. He is a wonderful leader and a young man that displays tremendous character. Competition, adversity and the heat of battle brings out the true nature in a person and Kline showed great composure, courage, and intelligence consistently."

Kline 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.

Kline joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Football Players of the Year A.J. Tarpley (2009-10, Wayzata), Anders Lee (2008-09, Edina) and Michael Floyd (2007-08, Cretin-Derham Hall) 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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