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**MERRIMACK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 11, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Kailey Blain of Merrimack High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Blain is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Merrimack 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 Blain as New Hampshire's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Blain joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7 senior forward recorded 21 goals and 10 assists this past season, leading the Tomahawks (11-2-3) to the Class L state quarterfinals. Also the 2008-09 Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Blain is a two-time Player of the Year as named by both the *New Hampshire Union Leader* and the *Nashua Telegraph*. A member of the U.S. Youth Soccer 1992 Region I Olympic Development Program team, Blain is a two-time All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and finished her high school career with 74 goals and 38 assists.

Blain has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit breast cancer research and as a youth soccer instructor.

"Blain just takes over games," said Gary Karibian, head coach of St. Thomas Aquinas High. "She's a high-quality player, hard-working. Don't give the girl a chance to play. She'll get you. Blain's the kind of person who can take over a game and completely turn the tide."

Blain has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Georgetown University this fall.

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.

Blain joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kristy Zurmuhlen (2007-08, Fall Mountain Regional) and Lindsey Miller (2006-07, Bishop Guertin) 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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