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**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 11, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Whitney Cavender of University High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Cavender is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from University 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 Cavender as West Virginia'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, Cavender 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-4 senior midfielder recorded nine goals and 15 assists this past season, leading the Hawks (23-0-2) to the Class AAA state championship. The West Virginia High School Soccer Coaches Association Class AAA Player of the Year and an All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Cavender started every game of her four seasons with the Hawks' varsity. She concluded her high school career with 20 goals and 24 assists.

A two-time University High School Student of the Month, Cavender has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered on behalf of her church community. Cavender has also donated her time locally at an assisted living facility and by serving underprivileged children.

"From the time I started with her, you had this kid who matured in her decision making and her aggressiveness of play," said Christen Seaman, Cavender's coach with the West Virginia United Soccer Club. "She started to understand why and started purposefully moving on the soccer field. When you see a player like Cavender and see the amount of ability and talent she has toward the game of soccer, it's impressive. In the 10 years I've been coaching, I've rarely run into a kid like that from West Virginia."

Cavender will attend West Virginia 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.

Cavender joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Sarah Cogswell (2008-09, Jefferson), Megan Johnson (2007-08, George Washington), and Kim Abcouwer (2006-07, Charleston Catholic) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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