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**WHEAT RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 13, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Annie Kunz of Wheat Ridge High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Kunz is the second Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Wheat Ridge 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 Kunz as Colorado'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, Kunz 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 6-foot-1 junior forward has led the Farmers (13-1-2) to the Class 4A state tournament Round of 16, scheduled for May 15, and had recorded 22 goals and seven assists at the time of her selection. The 2009 Class 4A Player of the Year as selected by the Colorado Coaches Association and the Denver Post, Kunz led Wheat Ridge to the 2009 state title. She is a U.S. Soccer Federation Under-17 Women's National Team player pool and was a 2009 ESPN RISE Honorable Mention All-American selection. She had recorded 60 goals and 28 assists in her prep career through 16 games this season.

Kunz has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. The Class 4A 2009 state track champion in the 100-meter high hurdles and the high jump, she has volunteered as a peer counselor at her school and as a youth soccer coach.

"The ball manages to hit Annie Kunz and go in the net no matter what body part it is," said Jared Spires, a coach with the Real Colorado club program. "She'll score the great goal. But what sets her apart is she knows where to go and she scores a lot of the ugly goals. She's got a good feel for what goal-scoring is. She's relentless. She goes at you and goes at you and goes at you."

Kunz has verbally committed to play soccer on scholarship at Texas A&M 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.

Kunz joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Players of the Year Olivia Wagner (2008-09, Dawson School), Beth West (2007-08, Grandview), and Brittney MacDonald (2006-07, J.K. Mullen) 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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