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**LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Shea Groom of Liberty High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Missouri Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Groom is the first Gatorade Missouri Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Liberty 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 Groom as Missouri'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, Groom 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.).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-5 junior forward had led the Blue Jays to a 16-2 record and a bye into the Class 3, District 16 tournament semifinals, scheduled for May 15, recording 24 goals and 15 assists. A 2009 ESPN RISE First Team All-American, Groom was the 2009 Class 3 Offensive Player of the Year and is a two-time First Team All-State selection. A member of the U.S. Soccer Federation Under-18 National Team, she is the nation's No. 4 recruit in the Class of 2011 as rated by TopDrawerSoccer.com and had recorded 89 goals and 46 assists in her prep career through 18 games this season.

Groom has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"You may not see Shea Groom for 10 minutes, then she has ball and it's in the back of the goal," said Miriam Hickey, a coach with the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Olympic Development Program. "She knows when to slow down and knows when to go for it. She reads the game so well. She's technically sound at a high speed, and there are not many girls at her age who are that far advanced in the game."

Groom 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.

Groom joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Soccer Players of the Year Morgan Marlborough (2008-09, Lee's Summit North), Molly Campbell (2007-08, St. Teresa's Academy), and Lauren Fowlkes (2006-07, St. Teresa's Academy) 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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