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**VERONA AREA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 Alex Melin of Verona Area High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Melin is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Verona Area 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 Melin as Wisconsin'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, Melin 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-8 senior midfielder/forward had recorded 17 goals and 9 assists at the time of her selection, leading the Wildcats to an 11-2-0 mark entering their May 14 regular-season clash with Beloit. Melin missed all of last season with a knee injury, but was a Second Team All-State selection as a sophomore in 2008. She is also a two-time member of the All-Badger South Conference Team.

Melin has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, youth soccer programs and as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit the homeless.

"Melin is extremely physical and she combines that with great technical ability," said Ben Voss, head coach of rival Madison Memorial. "She controls possession and she can shoot from anywhere. She could have started for my boys' team this year, and we went to the state final."

Melin has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Iowa 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.

Melin joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Soccer Players of the Year Taylor Madigan (2008-09, Waunakee), Laurel Ragalie (2007-08, Bradford), and Jennifer Baumann (2006-07, Catholic Memorial) 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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