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

**SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 18, 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 Ben Norton of Sidwell Friends School as its 2009-10 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Norton is the fourth Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Sidwell Friends 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 Norton as District of Columbia's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Norton joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Tony Meola (1986-87, Kearney HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot, 160-pound senior defender recorded six goals and two assists this past season, leading the Quakers (13-1-4) to their second straight Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference Tournament title. A *Washington Post* First Team All-Met selection, Norton is a two-time First Team All-MAC honoree and helped Sidwell to four straight regular season championships.

Norton has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. He has completed a service mission to Fiji, where he joined in efforts to improve local living conditions.

"Ben Norton is a pretty hard-nosed center back and really good in the air," said Zach Samol, Norton's coach with the Potomac Academy Soccer Club. "He impresses you more and more as you're around him and train him and watch him. He's a real simple, good decision-maker and plays within his talents as a center back."

Norton will attend Amherst College this fall, where he will play soccer.

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.

Norton joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Chris Perez (2008-09, Gonzaga College), Yoni Berhanu (2007-08, Sidwell Friends School), and Matt Marcin (2006-07, Charter School of Wilmington) 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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