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

**ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 Darren McAfee of Albuquerque Academy as its 2009-10 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year. McAfee is the third Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Albuquerque Academy.

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 McAfee as New Mexico'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, McAfee 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 5-foot-11, 165-pound senior midfielder recorded 29 goals and 23 assists this past season, leading the Chargers (15-7) to the Class 4A state semifinals. The Class 4A Player of the Year, McAfee is a two-time First Team All-State selection. The leading scorer in Class 4A this past season, he concluded his high school career with 64 goals and 49 assists.

McAfee has maintained a weighted 4.34 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Ronald McDonald House Charity and a food bank in addition to donating his time as a youth camp counselor. A talented artist, McAfee qualified for a national Scholastic Art Award in pencil drawing.

"The thing about Darren McAfee is that Albuquerque Academy's ability to succeed was solely based on his ability to perform," said Mike Strati, head coach of rival St. Pius X High. "If you shut him down, you shut his team down. He's great off the ball, that's where he's dangerous. He's strong on the ball, he loses defenders and he sneaks away from you and pops up out of nowhere."

McAfee remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

McAfee joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Soccer Players of the Year Pat Pacheco (2008-09, Taos), Victor Rodriguez (2007-08, Las Cruces), and Seth C'de Baca (2006-07, Sandia Preparatory) 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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