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**SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 18, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Andrew Mercier of South Burlington High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Mercier is the third Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from South Burlington 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 Mercier as Vermont'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, Mercier 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-8 senior midfielder recorded five goals and seven assists this past season as the Rebels (8-6-2) reached the Division I quarterfinals. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Mercier was also named First Team All-State in each of the last two seasons.

Mercier has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. Also an accomplished saxophonist and jazz musician, he has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach.

"Mercier is a classical midfielder," said Bob Day, head coach of rival Burlington High. "The quickness of his feet and his ability to control the ball are second to none."

Mercier will attend Colgate University 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.

Mercier joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Soccer Players of the Year Rob Cole (2008-09, South Burlington), Tyler Macnee (2007-08, Champlain Valley Union), and Andy Borah (2006-07, Champlain Valley Union) 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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