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**GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Zack Claudio of George Washington High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Claudio is the second Gatorade West Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from George Washington 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 Claudio as West Virginia'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, Claudio 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-10 senior midfielder recorded three goals and 13 assists this past season as the Patriots (14-4-4) reached the Class AAA Region 3 final. The Mountain State Athletic Conference Player of the Year and Class AAA Midfielder of the Year, Claudio was also named a First Team All-State selection by both the West Virginia High School Soccer Coaches Association and the West Virginia Sports Writers Association.

Claudio has maintained a 4.62 GPA in the classroom. A chemistry tutor at his school, he has volunteered locally serving meals to the homeless and delivering food baskets to needy families.

"He's just a great all-around player," said Rocky Powell, head coach of rival Woodrow Wilson High. "He's not a big scorer, but he's the general out there, a real playmaker. He always makes his presence known."

Claudio has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at West Virginia University 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.

Claudio joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Jeremy Chambers (2008-09, Princeton), Nader Sawtarie (2007-08, The Linsly School), and Vinny Crumrine (2006-07, Wheeling Park) 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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