

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

**IRMO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 6, 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 Emmett Lunceford of Irmo High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Lunceford is the fifth Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Irmo 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 Lunceford as South Carolina'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, Lunceford 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 junior midfielder had led the Yellow Jackets (19-1) to the top ranking in Class 4A by SCsoccer.com at the time of his selection, recording six goals and 12 assists. A 2009 ESPN RISE Second Team All-American selection and a member of the U.S. Youth Soccer 1992 Region III Olympic Development Program team, Lunceford has been named to the Disney Soccer Showcase All-Star Team that will travel to Europe this summer.

Lunceford has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church youth group.

"Emmett Lunceford is a complete team player," said Sam Okpodu, a coach with the South Carolina Olympic Development Program. "Not only can he score goals, he can make his teammates look absolutely wonderful. In two years at ODP, I always saw him as someone destined for something big in this game."

Lunceford has verbally committed to play soccer on scholarship at the University of South Carolina beginning in the fall of 2011.

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.

Lunceford joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Soccer Player of the Year Enzo Martinez (2008-09, 2008-07, & 2007-06, Northwestern) 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).

###