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Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**RIVERBEND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VIRGINIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 6, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Ryan Zinkhan of Riverbend High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Zinkhan is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Riverbend 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 Zinkhan as 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, Zinkhan 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-9, 150-pound junior forward had led the Bears (8-0-2) to the No. 6 ranking in the Metro area by the *Washington Post* at the time of his selection, recording 13 goals and six assists. A two-time First Team All-Commonwealth District selection, Zinkhan is a member of the U.S. Soccer Federation Under-18 Men's National Team pool, having participated in three national team camps since the beginning of the 2009-10 school year.

Zinkhan has maintained a 3.81 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church youth group.

"Ryan does everything for the team on both sides of the ball," said Erwan Le Crom, Zinkhan's club coach with the Richmond Strikers. "His best trait is his quickness. He scores on counter attacks. Once he gets behind defenders, he's gone. He can get in between players or turn quickly around defenders—I've always been impressed how quickly he can turn with the ball."

Zinkhan has verbally committed to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

Zinkhan joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Will Bates (2008-09, Thomas Dale), Christian McLaughlin (2007-08, Herndon), and Uche Onyeador (2006-07, Potomac Falls) 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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