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**CONWAY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARKANSAS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 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 Preston Purifoy of Conway High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Purifoy is the second Gatorade Arkansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Conway 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 court, distinguishes Purifoy as Arkansas' best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Purifoy joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Chris Paul (2002-03, West Forsyth HS, N.C.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-5 senior forward led the Wampus Cats (27-2) to the Class 7A state championship this past season, scoring 25 points and grabbing seven rebounds in a 66-56 title game win over Fayetteville. An All-State selection the last two seasons, Purifoy averaged 15.8 points, 5.0 rebounds and 1.8 blocks per game.

Purifoy has maintained a 3.34 GPA in the classroom. An active member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of environmental initiatives.

"Purifoy is a man among boys," said Jerry Bridges, head coach of rival Cabot High. "He can play inside, can play outside, he's powerful off the bounce, he can shoot the three ... he's a really tough match-up for anyone."

Purifoy has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Alabama-Birmingham 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.

Purifoy joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Fred Gulley (2008-09 & 2007-08, Fayetteville) and James Anderson (2006-07, Junction City) among the state's list of former award winners.

To celebrate the award's 25th anniversary, Gatorade wants you to vote for the All-Time Greatest Players of the Year at gatorade.com/POY25. 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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