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**STRATFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT 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 Brandon Sherrod of Stratford High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Sherrod is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Stratford 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 Sherrod as Connecticut's 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, Sherrod 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-4, 235-pound senior center averaged 16.1 points, 14.7 rebounds and 6.3 blocks per game in leading the Red Devils (25-0) to Tuesday's Class L semifinals where they defeated Wilbur Cross High, 69-61, on the strength of 16 points and 20 rebounds from Sherrod. Stratford will face New London High in the Class L state final scheduled for later this week. The 2010 Southwest Conference Player of the Year, Sherrod has amassed more than 300 blocked shots as a three-year varsity starter and has registered 28 double-double and nine triple doubles in his career.

Sherrod has maintained a 3.27 GPA in the classroom. A member of his school choir, concert band and drama club, he serves as the vice president of his senior class and has volunteered on behalf of area homeless shelters.

"I couldn't ask for a better player to coach than Brandon Sherrod," said Stratford High Head Coach Paul Dudzinski. "He completely changes the game for us whenever he's on the court. You couldn't ask for anyone to give you more on or off the court than he gives you."

Sherrod remains undecided upon a college destination.

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.

Sherrod joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Basketball Players of the Year Greg DeSantis (2008-09, Notre Dame Catholic Allan Chaney (2007-08, New London), and Matthew Bryan-Amaning (2006-07, South Kent School) 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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