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**GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 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 Tyler Thornton of Gonzaga College High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Thornton is the third Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gonzaga College 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 Thornton as District of Columbia'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, Thornton 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).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-2, 190-pound senior point guard had led the Eagles (22-4) to the Alhambra Catholic Invitational Tournament, scheduled to begin on March 18. Entering the first round of the ACIT, Thornton boasted averages of 14.7 points, 4.0 assists, 3.4 rebounds and 2.1 steals per game this season. A returning First Team All-Met selection as named by *The Washington Post*, he scored 16 points in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference tournament championship game, but Gonzaga fell to DeMatha Catholic (Md.) High, 71-52. Thornton averaged 14.4 points, 6.0 assists, 4.5 rebounds and 3.0 steals per game as a junior.

Thornton has maintained a 3.38 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a tutor at elementary schools, as a basketball instructor at a clinic for intellectually challenged adults and to benefit the needy on behalf of The Campuss Kitchens Project.

"He's a point guard in the truest sense," said Gonzaga Head Coach Steve Turner. "He does it all. He leads the ship for us and runs things. He's our No. 1 defensive player. To me, he's a coach on the floor. He doesn't need to score points. Every time he's been challenged—every time somebody says, 'He doesn't do this'—he does it."

Thornton has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Duke 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.

Thornton joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Ian Hummer (2008-09, Gonzaga College), Max Kenyi (2007-08, Gonzaga College), and Chris Wright (2006-07, St. John's College) 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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