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**SHELBY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KENTUCKY 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 Elisha Justice of Shelby Valley High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Justice is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Shelby Valley 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 Justice as Kentucky'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, Justice 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 5-foot-11 senior point guard had led the Wildcats (28-4) to the first round of the state tournament, scheduled to begin on March 18. Entering the state tournament postseason, Justice boasted averages of 20.4 points, 6.2 assists, 4.1 steals and 4.0 rebounds this season. A returning First Team All-State selection as named by the *Courier-Journal* and *Herald-Leader*, he scored a game-high 18 points in Shelby Valley's 69-61 victory against Betsy Layne, earning Justice a third consecutive regional tournament Most Valuable Player honor en route to capturing the 15th Region championship. The state's record holder for career steals, Justice had amassed 1,991 points, 618 assists and 531 steals in his career at the time of his selection.

Justice has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and his church's youth group, he has volunteered locally as a youth basketball instructor, on behalf of the Adopt A Highway Program and as part of a holiday gift-giving campaign. He has also donated his time to a therapeutic horseback riding service for handicapped children.

"Elisha Justice has led a small public school from the mountains of Eastern Kentucky to unprecedented heights of any school in this area," said Shelby Valley Head Coach Jason Booher. "He is the only player I have seen that controlled both ends of the floor for each and every game throughout his high school career. I could coach 30 more years and never coach another one like him. His work ethic each and every day, year-round, is second to none."

Justice has verbally committed to play basketball as a preferred walk-on at the University of Louisville 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.

Justice joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jon Hood (2008-09, Madisonville North Hopkins), Darius Miller (2007-08, Mason County), and Steffphon Pettigrew (2006-07, Elizabethtown) 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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