

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**METAIRIE PARK COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® LOUISIANA 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 Matt Derenbecker of Metairie Park Country Day School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year.

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 Derenbecker as Louisiana'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, Derenbecker 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 state's returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Derenbecker led the Cajuns (38-6) to the Class 1A state championship game this past season, averaging 26.6 points, 10.4 rebounds, 4.0 assists, 2.3 blocks and 1.9 steals per game. A returning Class 1A First Team All-State selection as named by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association, the 6-foot-7, 195-pound senior swingman clicked for 24 points, seven rebounds and four assists in the Class 1A state title game, but Country Day fell to Christian Life, 49-42. The Most Valuable Player of last year's state championship game, he averaged 23.7 points, 11.3 rebounds, 6.0 assists, 3.0 steals and 1.0 blocks per game as a junior, leading the Cajuns to the 2008-09 Class 1A state championship.

Derenbecker has maintained a 3.53 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of Key Club International, he has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group as well as an elementary school playground restoration project in addition to completing week-long youth service retreat in North Carolina.

"It's amazing the respect that other players have shown for him," said Country Day Head Coach Mike McGuire. "After every game, people come up to him and say, 'Man what a player you are.' He's a one-man show. It's hard to put in words. He can play any position on the floor and he was called upon to be the best player on the court every night. Thing I love the most about him is that he refuses to lose. You don't get that from everybody. He's an absolute rarity."

Derenbecker has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Louisiana State 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.

Derenbecker joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year Greg Monroe (2007-08 & 2006-07, Helen Cox) 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.

###