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**LOS ALAMOS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 Alex Kirk of Los Alamos High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Kirk is the third Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Los Alamos 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 Kirk as New Mexico'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, Kirk 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-11, 230-pound senior center and forward led the Hilltoppers (19-10) to the Class 4A quarterfinals this past season, averaging 26.4 points, 13.9 rebounds, 7.6 blocks and 3.3 assists per game. A 2010 McDonald's High School All-American Game selection committee nominee, Kirk registered a triple-double with a season-high 17 blocks, 24 points and 16 rebounds in a 77-55 win over Taos High on Feb. 6. He is a three-time First Team All-State selection and was named the 2009 Co-District Player of the Year.

Kirk has maintained a 3.30 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered as a peer leader at his school, a guest speaker at local elementary school and as a youth basketball coach at an area YMCA.

"Offensively and defensively, Kirk is the complete package," said Ron Geyer, head coach of rival St. Michael's High. "He plays well in the paint, he can step out and shoot the three and he's an outstanding defender. He's the only Division I signee in the state and he is absolutely the real deal."

Kirk has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of New Mexico 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.

Kirk joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Players of the Year Lucio Luttrell (2008-09, Las Cruces), Jeff Taylor (2007-08, Hobbs), and Aaron 'Gordo' Castillo (2006-07, Las Cruces) 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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