

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**NORWICH FREE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 11, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Kastine Evans of Norwich Free Academy as its 2009-10 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Evans is the fourth Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Norwich Free Academy.

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 Evans as Connecticut's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Evans joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.)

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-8 senior guard had led the Wildcats (23-2) to the No. 3 seed in the Class LL state tournament. Entering Wednesday's quarterfinal game against Ridgefield High, Evans boasted averages of 19.8 points, 4.6 rebounds and 2.8 steals per game. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she was the MVP of the 2009 Class LL state championship game.

Evans has maintained a 3.60 GPA in the classroom. Also a volleyball standout, she has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs.

"Her all-around game is phenomenal, and the bigger the competition, the bigger she plays," said Brian Fleming, head coach of rival Glastonbury High. "She's tremendously skilled fundamentally. The best way to describe her is that she makes everything look easy."

Evans has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Evans joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Players of the Year Symone Roberts (2008-09, New Britain) and Heather Buck (2007-08 & 2006-07, Stonington) 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.

###