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**SOUTHWEST DEKALB HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® GEORGIA 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 Kayla Lewis of Southwest DeKalb High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Lewis is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Southwest DeKalb 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 Lewis as Georgia'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, Lewis 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 6-foot-1 shooting guard and small forward had led the Panthers (25-4) to the Class AAAA state tournament semifinals. Entering Wednesday's game against Forest Park, Lewis boasted averages of 14.1 points, 7.1 rebounds, 1.8 blocks, 1.4 steals and 1.2 assists per game. The Miss Georgia Basketball selection as named by the Atlanta Tipoff Club, Lewis shot 53.7 percent from the field and 72.8 percent from the free-throw line through 29 games. Also a 2010 Georgia Athletic Coaches Association North/South Senior All-Star Game selection, she led her team to Class AAAA state championships in her sophomore and junior seasons. Lewis eclipsed 1,000 career points this past winter.

Lewis has maintained a 3.66 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a mentor to local elementary school students, she has volunteered on behalf of her church, as a youth basketball instructor and as part of the Special Olympics.

"Kayla is one of the most mature student-athletes I have ever coached," said Southwest DeKalb Head Coach Kathy Walton. "She has always known what she wanted to do, and she makes it happen. Her work ethic is far superior to most high school students both on and off the court. Every coach at any level would love to have a student-athlete like Kayla Lewis."

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

Lewis joins recent Gatorade Georgia Basketball Player of the Year Anne Marie Armstrong (2008-09, Wesleyan School), Alicia Manning (2007-08, Etowah), and Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill) 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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