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**LINN-MAR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® IOWA 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 Kiah Stokes of Linn-Mar High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Stokes is the second Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Linn-Mar 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 Stokes as Iowa'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, Stokes 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.)

The 6-foot-3 junior center led the Lions (26-0) to the Class 4A state title this past season, averaging 19.5 points, 12.8 rebounds and 5.1 blocks per game. A two-time First Team All-Conference selection, Stokes clicked for 20 points, 18 rebounds and six blocks in a 38-35 win over Des Moines East High to give Linn-Mar its first Class 4A championship in 25 years. She is ranked No. 10 nationally by ESPN Hoopgurlz in the class of 2011 and was a member of the 2009 USA Basketball Women's U16 National Team that won a gold medal over Canada last August at the 2009 FIBA Americas U16 Championship for Women.

Stokes has maintained a 4.02 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach and on behalf of S.O.D.A, a school organization dedicated to reminding students of the dangers associated with drugs and alcohol.

"Stokes is so enormously talented," said rival Kennedy High Head Coach Dennis Roloff. "Every college coach in the country is following her because she can score and she rebounds so well. There just isn't anyone who can touch her. She's got all the tools to be one of the best ever from this area."

Stokes will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Stokes joins recent Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jaime Printy (2008-09, Linn-Mar), Kelly Krei (2007-08, City), and Kelsey Bolte (2006-07, Battle Creek-Ida Grove) 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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