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**OLIVER AMES HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 11, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Lauren Battista of Oliver Ames High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Battista is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Oliver Ames 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 Battista as Massachusetts' best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Battista 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 senior forward and guard averaged 22.7 points, 8.0 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 3.0 steals per game in leading the Tigers (24-1) to Tuesday's Division 2 state semifinals, where they defeated Melrose, 60-46, on the strength of 21 points and 12 rebounds from Battista. Oliver Ames will face either Millbury or Palmer in the state final March 13. A four-time *Brockton Enterprise* All-Scholastic honoree and a 2010 McDonald's All-American Game selection committee nominee, Battista tallied 24 points, 13 rebounds, four assists and four blocks in the South Sectional championship game en route to a 55-52 win over Fontbonne High. She is Oliver Ames' all-time leader in career points with 1,645 at the time of her selection.

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.

Battista joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Players of the Year Bilqis Abdul-Qadir (2008-09, New Leadership Charter School), Felicia Barron (2007-08, Springfield Central), and Carolyn Swords (2006-07, Lincoln-Sudbury) among the state's list of former award winners.

To celebrate the award's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Gatorade wants you to vote for the All-Time Greatest Players of the Year at [gatorade.com/POY25](http://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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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