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**BUTLER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Cierra Burdick of Butler High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Burdick is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Butler 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 Burdick as North Carolina'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, Burdick 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-2 junior guard and forward has led the Bulldogs (25-4) to the Class 4A state tournament final, scheduled for March 13. Entering the postseason's championship game, Burdick boasted averages of 18.6 points, 10.2 rebounds, 3.4 assists, 2.4 steals and 1.6 blocks per game. A returning First Team All-Area selection as named by the *Charlotte Observer*, she has shot 47.3 percent from the field and 84.6 percent from the free-throw line. Burdick played on the USA Basketball Women's U16 National Team this past summer.

Burdick has maintained a 4.06 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered as the lead counselor at the Butler Bulldog Basketball Camp and on behalf of multiple charitable organizations to benefit Charlotte's underprivileged children, including the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation.

"Cierra Burdick is a phenom," said Butler Head Coach Stephanie Butler. "She is an extremely hard worker and very competitive—both in the classroom and on the court. She is a student of the game, and she is viewed as a leader by her peers."

Burdick has verbally committed to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Tennessee beginning in the fall of 2011.

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.

Burdick joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Asia Williams (2008-09, Hillside), Candace Wood (2007-08, Victory Christian) and Cetera DeGraffenreid (2006-07, Smoky Mountain) 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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