

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEVADA 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 Alexis Byrd of Centennial High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Byrd is the second Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Centennial 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 Byrd as Nevada'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, Byrd 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 5-foot-10 guard led the Bulldogs (25-5) to the Class 4A regional final this past season, averaging 24.2 points, 7.1 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 3.2 steals per game. A two-time First Team All-State section and the 2010 Northwest Division Player of the Year, Byrd concluded her prep career with 1,982 points.

Byrd has maintained a 3.51 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's Best Buddies Program, which helps people with intellectual disabilities, she has volunteered locally reading to elementary school students and as part of a breast cancer awareness campaign.

"If there is any player you want to have the ball in her hands with the game on the line, it's Alexis Byrd," said Centennial High Head Coach Karen Weitz. "She is such a great shooter, but that doesn't really tell the whole story. She's the whole package as a person and a player."

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

Byrd joins recent Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Players of the Year Mia Bell (2008-09, Durango), Ashley Gayle (2007-08, Bishop Gorman), and Italee Lucas (2006-07, Centennial) 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.

###