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**AUBURN RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WASHINGTON 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 Mercedes Wetmore of Auburn Riverside High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Wetmore is the second Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Auburn Riverside 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 Wetmore as Washington'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, Wetmore 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-8 senior point guard led the Ravens (29-0) to a top-20 national ranking and the Class 4A state tournament title this past season, averaging 17.3 points, 5.8 rebounds, 4.8 assists and 1.3 steals per game. The South Puget Sound League North 4A Co-Most Valuable Player, Wetmore clicked for 17 points and nine rebounds in a 56-52 state championship game victory against Mead, capturing tournament Most Valuable Player honors. A returning *Seattle Times* Second Team All-State selection, she played as a freshman and sophomore on the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Auburn Riverside High Class 3A state championship teams.

Wetmore has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time locally as a youth basketball instructor, she has volunteered at a homeless shelter, on behalf of her church, as part of her team's breast cancer awareness benefit and as a mentor to middle school students.

"Mercedes Wetmore is a tremendous competitor with a strong drive to win," said Auburn Riverside High Head Coach Terry Johnson. "She has led the program to three state championships and a fourth-place finish at state. She has maintained a high GPA and has contributed to the community. Her contributions have gone far beyond the basketball floor."

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

Wetmore joins recent Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Players of the Year Lindsey Moore (2008-09, Kentwood), Ashley Corral (2007-08, Prairie), and Angie Bjorklund (2006-07, University) 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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