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**MILWAUKEE VINCENT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WISCONSIN 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 Nicole Griffin of Milwaukee Vincent High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Basketball Player of the Year.

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 Griffin as Wisconsin'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, Griffin 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 state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Griffin has led the Vikings (20-2) to a top-40 national ranking and the Division 1 regional tournament finals, scheduled for March 13. Entering the postseason's second round, Griffin boasted averages of 16.9 points, 13.0 rebounds, 7.1 blocks and 4.0 assists per game. A returning First Team All-State selection as named by the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association and *Associated Press*, the 6-foot-6 senior center averaged 17 points, 11 rebounds and seven blocks as a junior. She has helped Vincent to Division 1 state titles in each of her previous three seasons.

Also a standout volleyball player, Griffin has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 2 in her graduating class. She has volunteered on behalf of the Next Door Foundation for underprivileged children.

"She's just a force," said Milwaukee Vincent High Head Coach Marquis Hines. "She's scored over 1,000 points, she's won three state championships and she's a great student. She's been phenomenal. She's a special athlete who can run the floor, shoot the 3 and block shots. She's a phenomenal girl and a phenomenal athlete."

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

Griffin joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Basketball Players of the Year Rachael Hencke (2007-08, Grafton) and Lin Zastrow (2006-07, Jefferson) 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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