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**WINDHAM HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Riley Houle of Windham High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Houle is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Windham 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 field, distinguishes Houle as Connecticut's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Houle joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-2 senior midfielder recorded 18 goals and seven assists this past season, leading the Whippets (11-7) to the second round of the Class M state tournament. A member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team Player Pool, Houle was a 2010 ESPN RISE Second Team All-American selection and a 2010 National Soccer Coaches Association of America Youth All-American selection. Houle concluded her prep soccer career with 79 goals and 38 assists.

Houle has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. A volunteer youth soccer instructor, she has also created a fundraiser, JB24 Believe, to support a friend and teammate afflicted with leukemia, and she has donated her time locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit breast cancer research and an area homeless shelter.

"Riley Houle is the complete package in terms of a soccer player," said Rick Derella, Houle's club coach with Oakwood Soccer Club. "She's a very skillful and instinctive player. She's not a manufactured player. She can beat people on the run, she can shoot, she can pass. She can do it all."

Houle has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Connecticut this fall and recently graduated Windham High early to begin attending spring semester collegiate classes.

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.

Houle joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kate McCarthy (2009-10, The Loomis Chaffee School), Jessica Schloth (2008-09, St. Joseph High School), and Alex Uscilla (2007-08, St. Joseph High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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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