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**GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 23, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Joey Wilkins of Gonzaga College High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Wilkins is the fifth Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gonzaga College 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 Wilkins as District of Columbia's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Wilkins joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Tony Meola (1986-87, Kearney HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8, 155-pound senior defender recorded eight goals and six assists this past season, leading the Eagles (17-7-1) to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Tournament championship game. A Washington Post First Team All-Met selection, Wilkins was a First Team All-WCAC selection and a three-year starter for Gonzaga. He concluded his prep soccer career with 18 goals and 20 assists.

Wilkins has maintained a 3.37 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at an area homeless shelter and food bank and as a youth soccer coach.

"Joey Wilkins is a tough defender and a hard worker," said Judah Cooks, Wilkins' club coach with DC United. "He's an outstanding leader for his high school team. He doesn't shy away from tackles. He's very tough."

Wilkins has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Loyola University Maryland 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.

Wilkins joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Ben Norton (2009-10, Sidwell Friends School), Chris Perez (2008-09, Gonzaga College), and Yoni Berhanu (2007-08, Sidwell Friends 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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