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**PEORIA NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 Vince Ciccirelli of Peoria Notre Dame High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Ciccirelli is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Peoria Notre Dame 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 Ciccirelli as Illinois'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, Ciccirelli 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 6-foot-2, 195-pound senior forward led the Irish to a 26-1 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Ciccirelli recorded 36 goals and 15 assists, including a goal and assist in Notre Dame's 8-0 win over Ridgewood High in the title game. A 2010 ESPN RISE First Team All-American selection and the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association State Player of the Year, Ciccirelli is a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Men's National Team Player Pool. He concluded his prep soccer career with 96 goals and 51 assists.

Ciccirelli has maintained a 3.51 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at a child care center and as a youth soccer coach and counselor.

"Vince Ciccirelli is a big-time athlete," said Dale Schilly, Ciccirelli's club coach with Scott Gallagher. "He scores goals and is extremely fast. He's big as well, thick and strong and physical. He's just got such a special athletic quality."

Ciccirelli has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Ciccirelli joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Soccer Players of the Year Bryan Ciesiulka (2009-10, Neuqua Valley), Tim Zimmer (2008-09, Naperville Central), and John Shakon (2007-08, Hinsdale Central) 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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