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**BLUE VALLEY WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® KANSAS BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 23, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Nick Besler of Blue Valley West High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Besler is the second Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Blue Valley West 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 Besler as Kansas'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, Besler 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, 155-pound senior midfielder led the Jaguars to a 20-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Besler recorded a school-record 27 goals and nine assists, including a goal in the team's 2-1 win over Blue Valley North in the state title game. A 2010 ESPN RISE Third Team All-American honoree and an All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Besler concluded his prep soccer career with a school-record 47 goals and 24 assists.

Besler has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and as a youth soccer and basketball instructor.

"Nick Besler reads the game incredibly well and he's got great passing skills," said Oliver Twelvetrees, Besler's coach with the state Olympic Development Program team. "His desire and determination for someone who has so much skill is impressive. The way he goes about playing the game—every minute of every game he is working his tail off to help his team win. That's really what makes him special."

Besler 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.

Besler joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Soccer Players of the Year Jon Kempin (2009-10, Blue Valley North), Ethan Bauer (2008-09, Olathe South), and Coleton Henning (2007-08, Saint Thomas Aquinas) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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