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**ROCKCASTLE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KENTUCKY GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 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 Sara Hammond of Rockcastle County High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Kentucky Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Hammond is the first Gatorade Kentucky Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rockcastle County 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 court, distinguishes Hammond as Kentucky'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, Hammond 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 6-foot-2 senior forward has led the Rockets to a 32-1 record and a berth in the state's Sweet Sixteen tournament's first round against Madison Central High, scheduled for March 10. At the time of her selection, Hammond was averaging 15.8 points, 12.1 rebounds, 3.9 blocks, 2.3 assists and 1.6 steals per game. The first Kentucky female ever selected to play in the McDonald's All-American Game, Hammond had connected on 57.2 percent of her shots from the floor, including 46.4 percent of her 3-pointers. Entering the state tournament, she had recorded 2,030 points and a school-record 1,562 rebounds in her prep basketball career.

Hammond has maintained a 3.9 GPA in the classroom. The president of Rockcastle's student anti-drug program, she has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach and referee and on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"Sara Hammond is one of the best athletes I've ever coached against," said Tim Pyles, head coach of rival Wayne County High. "She has size, range, the ability to go inside and out, the ability to handle the ball and she shoots it well from the perimeter. And if you take that away she can put it on the floor. She's a tremendous athlete, a tremendous basketball player."

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

Hammond joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Girls Basketball Players of the Year Sarah Beth Barnette (2009-10, Lexington Christian Academy), A'dia Mathies (2008-09, Iroquois), and Tia Gibbs (2007-08, Butler Traditional) 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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