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**BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA 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 Danielle Muri of Billings West High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Muri is the second Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Billings 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 court, distinguishes Muri as Montana'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, Muri 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 5-foot-9 senior guard has led the Bears to an 18-3 record and a berth in the Class AA state quarterfinals against Big Sky High, scheduled for March 10. At the time of her selection, Muri was averaging 15.7 points, 8.7 rebounds, 5.5 assists and 4.0 steals per game, connecting on 53.2 percent of her shots from the floor. A 2010 First Team Class AA All-State pick and a four-time Eastern AA All-Conference selection, she had recorded 1,022 points in her prep basketball career entering the postseason elite eight.

Muri has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. An All-State soccer player with a state-record 83 goals, she has volunteered locally at an area homeless shelter and food bank, and has served in her school's student government.

"Danielle Muri is such a tough matchup," said Doug Brakke, head coach of rival Billings Senior High. "If you put a small guard on her, she's so strong, she'll post you up. If you go with a taller player, she'll go right by you. Defensively, she can guard anybody. She's quick enough to guard your best guard or strong enough to guard your best post."

Muri has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at North Dakota State University 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.

Muri joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Lexie Nelson (2009-10, Butte) and Joslyn Tinkle (2007-08 & 2008-09, Big Sky) 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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