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**BELLEVUE WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NEBRASKA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 10, 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 Alexis Akin-Otiko of Bellevue West High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Akin-Otiko is the first Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellevue 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 Akin-Otiko as Nebraska'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, Akin-Otiko 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-10 senior post averaged 16.9 points, 7.9 rebounds, 1.8 steals and 1.1 assists per game this past season, leading the Thunderbirds (25-3) to the Class A state championship game. A returning *Lincoln Journal Star* First Team Super-State and an *Omaha World-Herald* First Team All-Nebraska selection, Akin-Otiko shot 56.1 percent from the field and 75.5 percent from the free-throw line. In leading Bellevue West to the 2009 and 2010 Class A state titles, she produced 18.1 points and 7.2 rebounds per contest as a junior and scored 17.3 points per game as a sophomore.

Akin-Otiko has maintained a 3.77 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor, she has volunteered locally as a peer mentor and tutor for middle school students.

"Alexis is the hardest worker we have ever had," said Bellevue West Head Coach Matt Fritsche. "She comes to the gym twice a week at 6 a.m. during the season on her own time to work on her game. She lifts, conditions and thinks like a college player while still in high school. She is relentless in her pursuit of improvement and is her own worst critic."

Akin-Otiko has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Creighton 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.

Akin-Otiko joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jordan Hooper (2007-08 & 2009-10, Alliance) and K.K. Houser (2008-09, Lincoln Southeast) 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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