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**GALLUP HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 Justina Prairie Chief of Gallup High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Prairie Chief is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gallup 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 Prairie Chief as New Mexico'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, Prairie Chief 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-8 senior guard and forward led the Bengals to a 24-4 record entering the Class 4A state semifinals against Roswell High, scheduled for March 10. A McDonald's High School All-American nominee, Prairie Chief has averaged 21.1 points, 12.5 rebounds, 6.4 steals and 3.0 assists per game. Also the All-District Player of the Year and a two-time returning First Team All-District selection, is shooting 59 percent from the field, 48 percent from 3-point range and 73 percent from the free-throw line while producing 20 double-doubles and one triple-double this season.

Also a cross country and track standout, Prairie Chief has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor and peer mediator, she has volunteered locally on behalf of clothing drives, tree-planting initiatives and cleanup efforts.

"Prairie Chief is such a smart player," said Patrick Puentes, head coach of rival Rio Rancho High. "She's a great rebounder, and she involves her teammates. I've seen Prairie Chief be very unselfish and score 10 points, and seen her go off for 25 points. She does whatever her team needs to win."

Prairie Chief remains undecided regarding a collegiate destination.

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.

Prairie Chief joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kya DeGarmo (2009-10, Eldorado), Megan Muniz (2008-09, Rio Rancho), and Brenna Freeze (2007-08, La Cueva) 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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