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**BISHOP MCNAMARA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MARYLAND BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 17, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Marcus Thornton of Bishop McNamara High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Thornton is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop McNamara 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 Thornton as Maryland's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Thornton joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-3, 190-pound senior shooting guard averaged 23.1 points, 4.7 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 1.7 steals this past season, leading the Mustangs (21-9) to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference semifinals. A 2011 Washington Post All-Met selection and the 2011 WCAC Player of the Year, he is Bishop McNamara's career leader in 3-point field goal percentage (44 percent) and ranks second in career points (1,176).

Thornton has maintained a 3.18 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered as a tutor at his school in addition to donating his time on behalf of the Special Olympics as well as food and clothing drives for the needy.

"Marcus Thornton is a phenomenal player," said Blair Mills, head coach of rival Our Lady of Good Counsel High. "Rarely do people put up the kind of numbers he has in the WCAC and consistently shown that kind of dominance."

Thornton has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the College of William & Mary 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.

Thornton joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Players of the Year Josh Hairston (2009-10, Montrose Christian School), Christian Webster (2008-09, Landon School), and Sean Mosley (2007-08, St. Frances Academy), 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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