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**SOUTH SIOUX CITY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NEBRASKA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 17, 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 Mike Gesell of South Sioux City High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Gesell is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Sioux City 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 Gesell as Nebraska'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, Gesell 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-2, 185-pound junior point guard led the Cardinals to a 24-2 record and a second consecutive Class B state championship. Gesell recorded 22 points and six assists in the 69-56 state title-clinching win over Gretna High. A returning *Lincoln Journal Star* First Team Super-State and *Omaha World Herald* First Team All-Nebraska selection, he averaged 25.2 points, 8.2 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 2.9 steals per game in 2010-11. Gesell shot 52.3 percent from the field, 40.2 percent from 3-point range and 81.9 percent from the free-throw line. He produced 19.9 points, 7.7 rebounds, 6.4 assists and 3.3 steals per contest as a sophomore.

Gesell has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 1 in his graduating class. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor and referee, he has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group, a holiday gift-giving campaign, the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"We've been fortunate enough to have some great players come through here over the last 10 years, including Kirk Hinrich, but I don't know if we've ever had someone as good as Mike Gesell," said Tom Betz, head coach of rival Bishop Heelan High. "He's a winner. He plays every play. I've never seen a player handle the game the way he does. He can hit the 3-point shot, but the 15-foot pull-up jumper is his bread and butter. He does a great job of finding his teammates, too. The kid is soaking wet at the end of games, because he works so hard."

Gesell will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Gesell joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Players of the Year Elliott Eliason (2008-09 & 2009-10, Chadron) and Wes Eikmeier (2007-08, Archbishop Bergan Catholic), 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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