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**ELDORADO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 Chris Strong of Eldorado High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Strong is the first Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Eldorado 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 Strong as New Mexico'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, Strong 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-6, 220-pound senior frontcourt standout averaged 17.5 points, 11.3 rebounds, 2.4 blocks and 2.3 assists this past season, leading the Golden Eagles (21-9) to the Class 5A quarterfinals. A 2010 First Team All-State and 2010 First Team All-District selection, he recorded a double-double in 24 of Eldorado's 30 games this season.

Strong has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church youth group.

"Chris Strong has been a rock for us all season long," said Eldorado High head coach Roy Sanchez. "He works hard every day in practice and is a true leader."

Strong remains undecided upon a college 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.

Strong joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Basketball Players of the Year Alex Kirk (2009-10, Los Alamos), Lucio Luttrell (2008-09, Las Cruces), and Jeff Taylor (2007-08, Hobbs), 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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