

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**LONG ISLAND LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW YORK 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 Achraf Yacoubou of Long Island Lutheran High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Yacoubou is the first Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Long Island Lutheran 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 Yacoubou as New York'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, Yacoubou 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-5 senior guard led the Crusaders to a 21-4 record and a berth in the Class A New York Federation Tournament of Champions, scheduled for March 25. Yacoubou is averaging 19.0 points, 9.7 rebounds, 2.8 assists and 2.5 steals per game. A First Team All-State selection as a junior and a Second Team selection as a sophomore, he has been named co-Mr. Basketball by the Basketball Coaches Association of New York.

Yacoubou has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs and Haitian relief efforts.

"Yacoubou is a special player," said Brian Fruscio, head coach of rival Albany Academy. "He can put the ball on the floor, he can knock down the three, and he's a very good defensive player. He really competes."

Yacoubou has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Villanova 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.

Yacoubou joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Players of the Year Tobias Harris (2009-10, Half Hollow Hills West), Brandon Triche (2008-09, Jamesville-DeWitt), and Sylven Landesberg (2007-08, Holy Cross) 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.

###