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**MARCUS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TEXAS 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 Smart of Marcus High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Texas Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Smart is the first Gatorade Texas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Marcus 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 Smart as Texas' 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, Smart 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-4, 200-pound junior guard led the Marauders to a 39-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Smart averaged 14.0 points, 8.7 rebounds, 4.8 assists and 2.5 steals per game. The Class 5A State Tournament Most Valuable Player, Smart recorded 16 points, 11 rebounds, four steals and two assists in the state title game. A standout defender who took 53 charges on the season, he was the 2009 and 2010 District 6-5A MVP and the 2011 District 8-5A MVP as well as a 2010 Class 5A First Team All-State selection.

Smart has maintained a B average in the classroom. A member of the Black History Club, he has volunteered locally as an elementary school mentor and as a mentor to special-needs students at his school.

"Marcus Smart willed his team to a state championship," said Phil Parlin, head coach of rival Plano High. "He refused to let them lose. He has the best combination of desire to win, athletic ability and basketball IQ that I have seen. He did what he had to do so his team could win. That's a rare thing in today's basketball."

Smart 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.

Smart joins recent Gatorade Texas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Joseph Young (2009-10, Yates), Tommy Mason-Griffin (2008-09, Madison), and Willie Warren (2007-08, North Crowley), 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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