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**ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Ben Ferris of Essex High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Ferris is the third Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Essex 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 Ferris as Vermont'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, Ferris 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 senior guard averaged 23.4 points, 10.2 rebounds and 6.5 assists this past season, leading the Hornets to the Division I state tournament. A member of the All-State team as a junior, Ferris was named to the Vermont Basketball Coaches Association Dream Dozen in 2011. He is also a two-time First Team All-Metro selection.

Ferris has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a mentor for elementary school children.

"Ferris makes everyone around him better," said Paul Pecor, head coach of rival Rice Memorial. "He's really good with the ball, an extremely good 3-point shooter and he can go inside or outside."

Ferris will attend Tufts University this fall, where he will play basketball.

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.

Ferris joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Players of the Year Joe O'Shea (2009-10, Burlington), Clancy Rugg (2008-09, Burlington), and Matt Joslin (2007-08, North Country Union), 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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