

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**KENTRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® WASHINGTON 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 Gary Bell Jr. of Kentridge High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Bell Jr. is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kentridge 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 Bell Jr. as Washington'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, Bell Jr. 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, 200-pound senior guard averaged 28 points, eight rebounds, three assists and two steals per game this past season, leading the Chargers (21-10) to a sixth-place finish in the Class 4A state tournament. Named Mr. Basketball by the Washington Interscholastic Basketball Coaches Association, Bell shot 52 percent from the field, 42.4 percent from 3-point range and 70.0 percent from the free-throw line in 2010-11. A returning First Team All-State selection as named by *The News Tribune* and *Seattle Times*, he produced 22.6 points, 5.3 rebounds and 3.8 assists per contest as a junior.

Bell has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of his school's Kingsman Club, a mentoring program dedicated to promoting leadership and community service amongst African-American students.

"His numbers speak for themselves," said Daryll Hennings, Senior Athletic Director for the Rotary Style Basketball program, a club team organization. "He's going to Gonzaga for a reason. He's made himself into what he is. No one could have anticipated he'd be where he is today, because he was never the highest jumper or the biggest kid. His work ethic sets him apart from everybody else. He almost looks like a pro out there against high school kids. He has the nicest shot I've seen in high school outside of (Boston Celtics All-Star) Ray Allen."

Bell has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Gonzaga 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.

Bell Jr. joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Players of the Year Joe Harris (2009-10, Chelan), Peyton Siva (2008-09, Franklin), and Abdul Gaddy (2007-08, Bellarmine), 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).

###