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Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WASHINGTON BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 10, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced **Aaron Kovar of Garfield High School** as its **2010-11 Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Kovar is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Garfield 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 field, distinguishes Kovar as Washington's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Kovar joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Tony Meola (1986-87, Kearney HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-11, 150-pound junior midfielder has led the Bulldogs to a 13-2-1 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament, scheduled to begin May 17. Through 16 games, Kovar has scored 11 goals and passed for 14 assists. The Most Valuable Player of the Class 4A KingCo Conference, Kovar is a member of the U.S. Soccer Federation Under-18 Men's National Team.

Kovar has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of a voter-registration drive and as a peer mentor. He has also completed a service-mission trip to Guatemala, where he assisted villagers with dental care.

"Aaron brings a lot of flash," said Dick McCormick, Kovar's club coach with the Seattle Sounders. "He's got a good ability with both feet and he's a very good one-on-one player. Aaron can handle everyone."

Kovar 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.

Kovar joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Soccer Players of the Year Nick Palodichuk (2009-10, Camas), Michael Harris (2008-09, Shorecrest), and Brent Richards (2007-08, Camas) 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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