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**WHEAT RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 12, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Annie Kunz of Wheat Ridge High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Kunz is the second Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Wheat Ridge 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 Kunz as Colorado's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Kunz joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, East Brunswick HS, N.J.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot-1 senior forward led the Farmers to a 12-2-1 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament first round against Sand Creek High, scheduled for May 11. At the time of her selection, Kunz had scored 28 goals and passed for nine assists. The 2009-10 Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Kunz was a 2010 All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America as well as a 2010 Parade All-American. The two-time Denver Post Class 4A Player of the Year, Kunz led Wheat Ridge to state titles in 2009 and 2010. Entering the state tournament, she has recorded 106 goals and 42 assists in her prep soccer career.

Kunz has maintained a 3.82 GPA in the classroom. The Class 4A 2009 state track champion in the 100-meter high hurdles and the high jump and the runner-up in the 100 hurdles, 300 hurdles and high jump at the 2010 state meet, she has volunteered locally as a peer counselor at her school and as a youth soccer coach.

"Annie Kunz was a player I had to double-team just to slow her down, and she still scored two goals and recorded an assist against us," said Sean Stephans, head coach of rival Alameda High. "It was my sense that if she wanted to take over a game, then there would be very little we would be able to do to stop her."

Kunz has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Texas A&M 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.

Two-time winner Kunz joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Soccer Players of the Year Olivia Wagner (2008-09, Dawson School), and Beth West (2007-08, Grandview) 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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