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**MCPHERSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Katelyn Loecker of McPherson High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Loecker is the second Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from McPherson 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 Loecker as Kansas's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Loecker joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2003-04, 2002-03, & 2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot junior forward led the Bullpups to a 22-1 record entering the first round of the Class 4A state tournament against Girard High, scheduled for March 7. Loecker averaged 16.2 points, 8.4 rebounds, 3.7 assists, 2.9 steals and 1.3 blocks through 23 games. A returning Class 5A Second Team All-State selection as named by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association, Loecker helped McPherson to a third-place finish at the 2010 Class 4A state tournament during her sophomore season.

Also a volleyball standout, Loecker has maintained a 4.23 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor, she has volunteered on behalf of her church, as part of breast cancer research fundraisers and at a community Thanksgiving dinner.

"Katelyn is a great player," said Joe Blasi, head coach at Eisenhower High. "She has great stats. She scores and rebounds very well, but what impresses me most about her is her unselfishness. She sees the floor very well and will pass up an opportunity to score to give her teammate a better shot."

Loecker has verbally committed to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Oklahoma State University beginning in the fall of 2013.

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 ESPNHS 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.

Loecker joins recent Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Players of the Year Natalie Knight (2010-11, Olathe South High School), Tiffany Bias (2009-10, Andover Central), Taber Spani (2008-09, Metro Academy), Kendra Frazier (2007-08, Labette County), Morgan Boyd (2006 - 07, Olathe East), Carolyn McCullough (2003-04, St. Thomas Aquinas), and Lauren Wenski (2002-03, St. Thomas Aquinas) 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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