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**TWIN BRIDGES HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA 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 Peyton Ferris of Twin Bridges High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Ferris is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Twin Bridges 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 Montana'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, Ferris 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 5-foot-9 senior guard has led the Falcons to a 23-1 record and a berth in the Class C state quarterfinals against Winnett/Grass Range, scheduled for March 8. At the time of her selection, Ferris was averaging 18.2 points, 7.1 rebounds, 5.3 steals, 2.4 assists and 1.8 blocks per game. A four-time Class C First Team All-State selection, Ferris is a two-time District 11-12 C MVP. She averaged 27.7 points, 10.0 rebounds, 5.0 blocks, 4.0 steals and 3.0 assists as Twin Bridges won the Western C Division Tournament.

Ferris has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. Also a junior rodeo competitor, she has volunteered as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"Peyton Ferris shoots well, plays great defense and plays harder than any girl I've ever known in my life," said Mike McLeod, Ferris' AAU coach with Montana Hoops. "Peyton's numbers are better than anybody because she's in Class C but she can play at any level."

Ferris has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Montana State 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 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.

Ferris joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Danielle Muri (2010-11, Billings West High School), Lexie Nelson (2009-10, Butte), Joslyn Tinkle (2008-09 & 2007-08, Big Sky), Kirsten Tilleman (2006 - 07, Bozeman), Mandy Morales (2003-04, Billings West), and Michela Schmitz (2002-03, Great Falls) 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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