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**LINCOLN NORTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Brianna Craig of Lincoln Northeast High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Craig is the second Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln Northeast 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 Craig as Nebraska'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, Craig 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-11 senior guard led the Rockets to an 18-6 record and a berth in the Class A state quarterfinals this past season. Craig averaged 18.6 points, 8.2 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game. She was a First Team Super State selection as a junior and a Third Team All-Nebraska honoree.

Craig has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered as a peer tutor and on behalf of a local food bank.

"What makes Craig tough is her ability to create for herself and others," said Jon Perone, head coach at Benson High. "She's a tough matchup because of her height and athletic ability, and she has great footwork and balance around the rim."

Craig has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Kansas 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.

Craig joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Players of the Year Alexis Akin-Otiko (2010-11, Bellevue West High School), Jordan Hooper (2009-10 & 2007-08, Alliance), K.K. Houser (2008-09, Lincoln Southeast), Dominique Kelley (2006 - 07, Lincoln Northeast), Crystal Howard (2003-04, Omaha Central), and Jenni Flynn (2002-03, South Sioux City) 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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