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**MINOT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA 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 Holly Johnson of Minot High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Johnson is the second Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Minot 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 Johnson as North Dakota'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, Johnson 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-10 senior swing player led the Majettes to a 17-6 record and a berth in the Class A state tournament, scheduled to begin March 8. Johnson averaged 17.8 points, 6.4 rebounds, 3.3 assists and 1.9 steals through 23 games. A 2011 First Team All-State selection, she was also named the 2011 Minot Daily News Player of the Year as a junior.

Johnson has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has served on the student council and has volunteered locally on behalf of an area homeless shelter and a clothing drive for needy children.

"Holly Johnson is a nightmare for opposing coaches," said Andy Skunberg, head coach at Jamestown High. "She is a versatile player who can not only bring up the ball with pressure, she is also able to post up better than most in our conference. She is one of the better all-around players that I have seen in a while."

Johnson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at North Dakota 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.

Johnson joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Caitlin Farroh (2010-11, Grand Forks Central High School), Meghan Roehrich (2009-10, Fargo South), Kelsey Sigl (2008-09, Bismarck), Alex Feeney (2007-08, Bismarck), Jessica Kielpinski (2006 - 07, Mandan), Karla Beck (2003-04, Munich), and Carissa Jahner (2002-03, Fargo North) 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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