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Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)

**NATRONA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WYOMING 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 Kaylee Johnson of Natrona County High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Wyoming Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Johnson is the second Gatorade Wyoming Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Natrona County 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 Wyoming'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 6-foot-1 sophomore wing player led the Fillies to a 22-1 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament, scheduled for March 8. Johnson averaged 21.9 points, 12.8 rebounds, 6.2 blocks, 2.8 steals and 2.6 assists while shooting 60 percent from the floor through 23 games. A two-time First Team All-Conference selection, she leads the state in scoring, blocked shots and field goal percentage this season.

Johnson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as an elementary school tutor, a youth basketball coach and as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit an area toddler who was born with multiple complications in her eye.

"Kaylee Johnson is the most natural leader I have coached in the last 19 years," said Natrona County head coach Douglas Diehl. "She is very competitive and an incredible teammate. Her work ethic along with her classroom performance makes her the perfect role model for the younger kids in our program."

Johnson will begin her junior year of high school 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 Wyoming Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jordan Kelley (2010-11 & 2009-10, Campbell County High School), Jordan Kent (2008-09, Campbell County), Kristen Scheffler (2007-08, Lovell), Hillary Carlson (2006 - 07, Cheyenne Central), Charity Czerwinski (2003-04, Cheyenne Central), and Kristen Newlin (2002-03, Riverton) 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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