

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**DESERT RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® ARIZONA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Taylor Kaczmarek of Desert Ridge High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Arizona Baseball Player of the Year. Kaczmarek is the second Gatorade Arizona Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Desert Ridge 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 field, distinguishes Kaczmarek as Arizona's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Kaczmarek joins an elite alumni association of past state baseball award winners, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-2, 210-pound senior left-handed pitcher finished 11-1 with a 2.16 ERA, recording 78 strikeouts in 62 innings this past season to lead the Jaguars (30-4) to the Class 5A Division I state championship. The Class 5A Player of the Year as named by the Arizona Baseball Coaches Association, Kaczmarek, also a first baseman, batted .436 with 54 RBI, 30 runs scored, 13 doubles and 12 home runs. He helped lead Desert Ridge to the 2009 Class 5A Division II state title as a junior, batting .391 with eight home runs in 2009.

Kaczmarek has maintained a 3.12 unweighted GPA in the classroom. An enrollee in his school's rigorous engineering program, he has volunteered locally as a youth baseball instructor.

"Kaczmarek pitched and also hit very well," said Eric Kiebler, head coach of rival Horizon High. "He's a really good hitter. He's a multi-position player, and he's really good at all of them. He won a state championship. Without him, I don't think they win it."

Kaczmarek will attend South Mountain Community College this fall, where he will play baseball.

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 ESPN RISE 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.

Kaczmarek joins recent Gatorade Arizona Baseball Players of the Year Jake Barrett (2008-09, Desert Ridge), Jaff Decker (2007-08, Sunrise Mountain) and Tim Alderson (2006-07, Horizon) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

###