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## COOK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE® GEORGIA 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 **Kaleb Cowart of Cook High School** as its **2009-10 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year**. Cowart is the first Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cook 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 Cowart as Georgia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Cowart 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-3, 195-pound senior right-handed pitcher and switch-hitting third baseman led the Hornets (30-3) to the Class 2A state final, scheduled for May 31. Entering the title game, Cowart owned a 10-0-1 record with a 0.86 ERA and 106 strikeouts in 65 innings on the mound and was batting .650 with 11 home runs and 57 RBIs along with a 1.250 slugging percentage, a remarkable .738 on-base percentage and 32 stolen bases in 32 attempts. A 2009 Aflac All-American, Cowart is a two-time First Team All-State selection and is rated as the nation's No. 6 prospect in the Class of 2010 by Perfect Game USA and No. 13 by Baseball America.

Cowart graduated with an unweighted 94.5 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered in association with the Cook High Anchor Club, participating in service projects to assist needy local families and children as well as blood-donation drives and a literacy-outreach initiative for elementary-age students. He has also donated his time on behalf of his Fellowship Baptist Church via its Vacation Bible School and youth program. A past member of the Cook High Student Leadership Team, which facilitates freshman assimilation on campus, Cowart has also served as an Adel-Cook Recreation Department youth sports volunteer.

"I think Cowart has the chance to become the next Chipper Jones," said Cook High Head Coach Bob Owsley. "He has all the skill and tools it takes to succeed at a very high level. He's without a doubt the best player I have ever coached."

Cowart has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Florida State University this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in this month's Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft.

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.

Cowart joins recent Gatorade Georgia Baseball Players of the Year Zach Wheeler (2008-09, East Paulding), Ethan Martin (2007-08, Stephens County) and Josh Smoker (2006-07, Calhoun) 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).

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