

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**LUGOFF-ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Forrest Koumas of Lugoff-Elgin High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year. Koumas is the first Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lugoff-Elgin 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 Koumas as South Carolina's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Koumas 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-0, 190-pound senior right-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Demons (20-4) to the Class 3A state title this past season, posting a 9-1 record with a 1.66 ERA and 124 strikeouts in 76 innings while batting .474 and hitting a state-leading 18 home runs to go with 57 RBIs and 16 stolen bases. The Class 3A Player of the Year, Koumas averaged 2.1 strikeouts per inning-pitched and 62 percent of his hits went for extra-bases this past season. He is rated the nation's No. 168 prospect in the Class of 2010 by Perfect Game USA.

Koumas has maintained a B average in the classroom. He is active in his church community and has volunteered locally as a youth baseball coach.

"Forrest Koumas is without a doubt the most talented player I have ever coached in 17 years," said Lugoff-Elgin Head Coach Randy Stokes. "He's a tremendous competitor and a perfectionist. He works so hard to make himself the best player."

Koumas has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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 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.

Koumas joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Madison Younginer (2008-09, Mauldin), Zac Fuesser (2007-08, York Comprehensive) and Steven Neff (2006-07, Lancaster) 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.

###