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**J.Z. GEORGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Marcus Jackson of J.Z. George High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Jackson is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from J.Z. George 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 track, distinguishes Jackson as Mississippi's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Jackson joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-6 senior cleared a state record 7 feet, 2.25 inches to win the high jump at the Class 2A state meet this past season, and led the Jaguars to their fourth consecutive state title as a team. Jackson's winning jump was the fifth-highest in the nation at the time of his selection. He also topped the field in the triple jump with a leap of 44-3 and was fourth in the long jump.

Jackson has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs.

"He's an unbelievably hard worker with a team first attitude," said J.Z. George Head Coach Heath Dudley. "He's a young man who will do great things."

Jackson has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Mississippi 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 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.

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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