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**VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEVADA 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 Garic Wharton of Valley High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Nevada Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Wharton is the first Gatorade Nevada Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Valley 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 Wharton as Nevada'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, Wharton 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 state's returning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Wharton won the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.89 seconds and the 200-meter dash in 21.44 seconds at the Class 4A state meet this spring, leading the Vikings to 10th place as a team. The 6-foot senior sprinter also anchored the seventh-place 4x100-meter relay squad that clocked a 43.56. His times of 10.58 seconds in the 100 at the Skyhawk Invitational and 21.05 seconds in the 200 at the Southern Region finals ranked No. 31 and No. 6 in the nation, respectively, among prep competitors at the time of his selection. Wharton set the 100-meter state meet record of 10.39 seconds as a junior and the 200-meter dash mark of 21.10 seconds as a sophomore in 2008.

Also a football standout, Wharton has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered extensively as a youth athletics mentor and instructor at a local recreational center.

"His competitiveness is his greatest attribute," said Valley Head Coach Mark Salzman. "Probably the best race of the year for him was the 4x100 relay at the regional meet. He was 35 yards behind and caught the guy. It was just unbelievable. People were in shock. They'd never seen anything like that before. He's also a good technician. He has learned to run correctly, and he has learned to run the different aspects of a race. I think he has a great future ahead of him."

Wharton has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arizona beginning 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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