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**KENAI CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Lierin Flanagan of Kenai Central High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Flanagan is the first Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Kenai Central 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 Flanagan as Alaska's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Flanagan joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Iowa) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The senior sprinter won the 200-meter dash with a time of 25.86 seconds and the 400 in a state-meet record 55.95 at the Class 4A state championship meet this spring, leading the Cardinals to third place as a team. The Class 4A State Track and Field Championships Outstanding Competitor, Flanagan also anchored the winning 4x400-meter relay quartet that finished in 4:01.72. She won gold in the 200-meter dash as a sophomore at the 2008 Class 4A state meet.

Also a standout volleyball and basketball player, Flanagan has maintained a 3.07 unweighted GPA average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball instructor and in association with multiple community cleanup efforts.

"Lierin Flanagan has certainly performed well her entire career," said Marcus Dunbar, head coach of Kodiak High. "The fact that she's gotten a little better each year is what's most impressive, especially when you consider she's out there running by herself most of the time. To continue to improve like she has is very impressive. She's an excellent athlete."

Flanagan has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Montana State University 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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