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**ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS 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 Grace Heymsfield of Elkins High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Heymsfield is the first Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Elkins 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 Heymsfield as Arkansas'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, Heymsfield 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 5-foot-4 senior distance runner won both the 1600- and the 3200-meter run at the Arkansas Meet of Champions as well as the Class 3A state meet this spring, leading the Elks to 10th place as a team. The two-time Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year and the 2007-08 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Heymsfield broke her own state record in the 1600 at the Meet of Champions with a time of 4:57.98 and also won the 3200 in 11:11.36. She is the only distance runner in state history to run a sub-five-minute 1600 at the Meet of Champions, something she has accomplished each of the last two years.

Heymsfield has maintained a 4.01 GPA and is the valedictorian of her class. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she is an active member of her church community and has volunteered as a Sunday School teacher.

"I am truly blessed to have been able to work with Grace Heymsfield," said Elkins High head coach Beverly Mabry. "She is one of those athletes that you usually can only dream to coach."

Heymsfield has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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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