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**PORT ST. JOE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Kayla Parker of Port St. Joe High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Florida Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Parker is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Port St. Joe 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 Parker as Florida'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, Parker 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-6 senior won four individual state titles this spring and led the Tiger Sharks to the Class 1A state championship as a team. Parker won the 100-meter high hurdles in 14.37 seconds, the 100-meter dash in 12.23, the 200 in 25.13, and soared 19 feet, 5.5 inches to capture the long jump crown. Parker concluded her prep career with 12 individual state titles and her season-best 100-meter hurdle clocking of 13.96 seconds ranked as the nation's No. 20 mark among prep competitors at the time of her selection.

Parker has maintained an unweighted 3.89 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria, which seek to honor not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of scholastic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field. She has volunteered locally on behalf of her church's daycare center, youth sports programs and as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research.

"Kayla is very focused, very mature and a hard worker," said Scott Gowan, head coach at Chiles High. "She can do a lot of different things and she's had a fantastic career. I think she would be a great heptathlete in college."

Parker has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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