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Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**PENDLETON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 Ellie McCardwell of Pendleton Heights High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Indiana Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. McCardwell is the first Gatorade Indiana Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Pendleton Heights 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 McCardwell as Indiana'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, McCardwell 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 state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, McCardwell won her second consecutive state pole vault championship this spring, soaring 13 feet, 3 inches. The 5-foot-4 senior cleared 13-feet, 7 inches at the sectional meet, the third-best vault in the country among prep competitors at the time of her selection. McCardwell finished second in the pole vault at the Nike Outdoor Nationals in 2009.

McCardwell has maintained an A average 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. An active member of her church youth group, she has volunteered locally on behalf of assisted living facilities as well as a campaign to raise funds for clean drinking wells in Kenya.

"Ellie is a role model on how to fight through injuries and illnesses and continue to practice, and on how not to just be satisfied with being good at school or the county or the conference or even the state," said Pendleton Heights head coach Ron Hinton.

McCardwell has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Stanford 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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