

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Kearsten Peoples of Ottawa High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Kansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Peoples is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Ottawa 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 Peoples as Kansas'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, Peoples 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 6-foot-1 senior set state records while sweeping the shot put and discus this spring at the Class 4A state meet. Peoples hurled the shot 51 feet, 10.75 inches, more than two feet better than anyone else in the nation to date. Her throw of 166 feet, 7 inches in the discus ranked No. 5 in the country among prep competitors at the time of her selection. Peoples has won five state titles overall—three in the shot put, two in the discus.

Peoples has maintained an unweighted 3.42 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of fundraising campaigns to benefit cancer research.

"We always knew she could throw over 50 feet and she picked the best time to finally do it," said Ottawa High head coach Mark Laws. "She's an exceptional athlete and a good person too."

Peoples has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Missouri 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).

###