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**RICHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 Jessica January of Richfield High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. January is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Richfield 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 January as Minnesota'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, January 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-7 freshman hurdler won the 100-meter high hurdles as well as the 300-meter intermediate hurdles and claimed third-place in the long jump at the Class AA state meet this spring, leading the Spartans to third place as a team. A 2010 First Team All-State selection, January was named the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* Athlete of the Week for May 31 when she broke state record in the 100 hurdles with a time of 14.33, eclipsing the previous record of 14:54 set by Little Falls' Anna Ratzloff in 1990.

January has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of area road races, charity fund-raisers and as a youth basketball coach.

"Jessica January is an outstanding person and one of the hardest workers you will ever see," said Richfield High head coach Pat Burns. "Even as a freshman, she became one of our leaders this season. Every coach wants to have a kid like that. She's very athletic but she's also extremely coachable and almost never makes the same mistake twice."

January will begin her sophomore year of high school 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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