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**LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 Melissa Kurzdorfer of Lancaster High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade New York Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Kurzdorfer is the second Gatorade New York Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lancaster 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 Kurzdorfer as New York'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, Kurzdorfer 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 senior set state records in both the shot and hammer throw this spring, and captured the Div. I state championship in the discus. Kurzdorfer launched the discus 162 feet, 8 inches at the state meet, the No. 7 throw in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection, and also finished second in the shot put at states. Her earlier state-record efforts of 49 feet, 9.5 inches in the shot put and 192 feet, 8 inches in the hammer throw, respectively, ranked No. 2 and No. 3, nationally, in 2010. Kurzdorfer concluded her prep career with four state titles in the discus, three in the shot put and four in the indoor shot put.

Kurzdorfer has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of senior citizen programs.

"Melissa has the ability to flip a switch and go to a level the competition simply does not have," said Lancaster High throwing coach George Rak. "She's an unbelievably hard worker whose goal was to be an elite level thrower, and she's accomplished that."

Kurzdorfer has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Kent State 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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