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**HOWARD SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 LaQuisha Jackson of Howard School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Tennessee Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Jackson is the first Gatorade Tennessee Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Howard 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 Jackson as Tennessee'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, Jackson 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 sophomore set state records in the 100- and 200-meter dash at the Class A-AA state championship meet this spring, leading the Hustlin' Tigers to third place as a team. Jackson's winning time of 11.46 seconds in the 100 ranked No. 5 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection. She sliced 0.20 seconds off the state record in the 200 meters with a wind-aided finish of 23.86. Her best legal clocking in the 200 of 24.10 ranked as the nation's No. 24 time among prep competitors. Jackson, who also placed third in the pentathlon at the state meet and also ran the anchor leg on Howard's winning 4x100 and 4x200 relay teams, is a seven-time state champion.

Jackson has maintained an unweighted 3.05 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at the Sallie A. Crenshaw Bethlehem Center as a youth mentor.

"Holy cow, LaQuisha's awesome," said Gary Kinder, director of Kindersport Elite Athletics. "We don't have too many in Tennessee who are national caliber. That girl, she's the real deal. She could be running 11 flat for the 100 four years from now. That puts her in the top eight professionals in the country. That's what she looks like. This girl looks like a star."

Jackson will begin her junior 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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