

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**FRANKFORT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Bria Welker of Frankfort High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Welker is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Frankfort 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 Welker as West Virginia'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, Welker 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-6 freshman won three events at the Class AA state meet this spring, leading the Falcons to second place as a team. Welker won the 200-meter dash with a time of 25.65 seconds, the 400 in 57.71 and the long jump with a leap of 16 feet, 10.5 inches. She also placed second in the 100-meter dash, clocking a 12.51. Welker is already Frankfort's school record-holder in the 100, 200, 400 and long jump and she earned the most individual points of any competitor at the state meet.

Welker has maintained an unweighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Frankfort High Student Council, she has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit diabetes research and on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"Bria Welker just kept getting better and better every single meet," said Scott Furey, head coach of rival Keyser High. "She's the hardest worker they have. I was really happy to see her except for the fact we had to run against her six or seven times. We saw the back of her a lot. Her running form, everything, her height, her stride, is just perfect. She's lightning in a bottle."

Welker 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.

###