

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Dallas Escobedo of St. Mary's Catholic High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year. Escobedo is the first Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Mary's Catholic 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 field, distinguishes Escobedo as Arizona's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Escobedo joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alicia Hollowell (2000-01, Fairfield HS, 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.), Angela Tincher (2002-03, James River HS, Va.) and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro HS, Ariz.).

The No. 1-ranked player in the country by ESPN RISE, the 6-foot-1 senior pitcher led the Knights (33-3) to the Class 5A, Division I state title game this past season, posting a 33-3 record and a 0.06 earned run average while recording 500 strikeouts and issuing just 42 walks. Escobedo recorded nine no-hitters, as well as two perfect games, allowing only 40 hits in 240 innings. At the plate, she batted .412 with eight home runs and 28 RBI, amassing a .701 slugging percentage and a 1.264 OPS. Escobedo concluded her prep career with 1,882 strikeouts, 37 no-hitters and five perfect games.

Escobedo has maintained an unweighted 3.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's student council, she has volunteered locally in association with the St. Mary's Letterman Club and as a youth softball coach and instructor.

"She's head and shoulders above all the other pitchers I've seen in Arizona," said Heinz Mueller, head coach of Phoenix College. "She's just that much bigger and stronger than any other high school player. Physically she's imposing. She just dominates."

Escobedo has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Arizona 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.

Escobedo joins recent Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year Kenzie Fowler (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Canyon del Oro) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

###