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**ARKANSAS CITY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Kelsey Stewart of Arkansas City High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year. Stewart is the first Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Arkansas City 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 Stewart as Kansas' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Stewart 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 5-foot-4 sophomore pitcher and second baseman led the Bulldogs (18-4) to the Class 5A state quarterfinals this past season, batting .556 with four doubles, nine triples and two home runs. A 2010 USA Softball Junior Women's National Team selection camp invitee, Stewart finished the season with 23 runs scored, 20 RBI, 24 steals and zero strikeouts in 80 plate appearances. In the circle, Stewart posted an 8-3 record and a 1.13 earned run average along with 73 strikeouts and 16 walks, allowing just 23 hits in 62 innings.

Stewart has maintained an unweighted 3.65 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's student council, she has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach and instructor.

"There's nothing that she can't do—she has speed that's sickening," said Mark Griggs, Stewart's coach with the Wichita Mustangs Amateur Athletics Union club program. "She can hit with power, she can bunt—there's nothing offensively she can't do. She's an amazing baserunner. She has great instincts, things you can't teach. She's a complete player."

Stewart has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of Florida beginning in the fall of 2012.

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.

Stewart joins recent Gatorade Kansas Softball Players of the Year Nikki Armagost (2008-09, Andover Central), Paige Ladenburger (2007-08, Washburn Rural) and Eranne Daugharthy (2006-07, Olathe East) 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.

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