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**SOUTH LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KENTUCKY 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 Emily Gaines of South Laurel High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year. Gaines is the first Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Laurel 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 Gaines as Kentucky's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Gaines 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-8 senior right-handed pitcher and third baseman led the Cardinals to a 34-7 record this season and the Region 13 Tournament championship game. Gaines concluded her prep career as Kentucky's all-time leader in hits (345) and doubles (104), and the state single-season leader in hits (83) and doubles (27). She batted .634 this spring with 27 doubles, 17 home runs, 54 runs scored and 63 RBI, posting an on-base percentage of .696 and a slugging percentage of 1.244. In the pitching circle, Gaines finished 19-2 with a 0.68 earned run average, fanning 94 batters in 113.1 innings.

Gaines has maintained an A average in the classroom. The South Laurel High Homecoming Queen, she has volunteered locally as an elementary school science tutor and as a youth softball, basketball and volleyball coach.

"Emily Gaines is probably the best all-around player I've ever seen play the game in high school," said Jim Woodall, head coach of rival Southwestern High. "She can do anything, play anywhere and play it well. She's just an outstanding all-around athlete. What she brings to the softball field is unreal. When we play them, I look forward to just sitting and watching her. She just steals the show and she doesn't even mean to."

Gaines has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Gaines joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Softball Players of the Year Megan Taylor (2008-09, North Laurel) and Kirsten Allen (2007-08 & 2006-07, Ryle) 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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