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**MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS 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 Shannon Smith of Milford High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Milford 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 Smith as Massachusetts' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Smith 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 freshman right-handed pitcher started 13-0 with a 0.39 ERA this season, recording 167 strikeouts in 90 innings entering this week's Division 1 Central sectional semifinals. The Mid-Wach Conference Division A Most Valuable Player, Smith had recorded eight shutouts and three no-hitters at the time of her selection, leading the Scarlet Hawks to a 22-0 record. She also owned a .500 batting average with 24 RBI, 12 runs scored and eight doubles through 22 games.

Smith has maintained a 3.76 unweighted GPA in the classroom. Also an accomplished viola player, she has volunteered locally at a food bank, as a youth softball instructor, on behalf of her church and as part of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

"This year has been a very eye-opening and exciting year for a lot of people," said Milford Head Coach Brian Macchi. "Shannon has raised the bar for Milford softball. She's been dominating throughout the year. Now, you hear her name come up around the state, and we're seeing all different schools come to watch and scout her. She's bringing us to a whole new level."

Smith 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Players of the Year Nicole D'Argento (2008-09 & 2007-08, Ashland) and Kara Nilan (2006-07, Taconic) 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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