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**PACIFIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MISSOURI SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Jessica Damico of Pacific High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year. Damico is the first Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pacific 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 Damico as Missouri's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Damico 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-5 junior shortstop batted .539 this past season with 40 RBI and a state-record 15 home runs, leading the Indians to a 16-8 record. A First Team All-State selection, Damico was also named the Four Rivers Conference Player of the Year and participated in the 2009 Under Armour All-America Game.

Damico has maintained an unweighted 3.51 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of blood-donation drives and a food pantry.

"Damico is a rare combination of speed, power, size and strength," said Brad Wallach, head coach of rival Eureka High. "It doesn't matter what field she's on, she can hit it over the fence anywhere."

Damico has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at the University of Florida and will begin her senior 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.

Damico joins recent Gatorade Missouri Softball Players of the Year Nicole Hudson (2008-09, Webb City), Courtney Conley (2007-08, Eureka) and Kristin Nottelmann (2006-07, Rockwood Summit) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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