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**BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA 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 Jessyka MacDonald of Billings West High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Montana Softball Player of the Year. MacDonald is the second Gatorade Montana Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Billings West 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 MacDonald as Montana's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, MacDonald 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 junior pitcher and shortstop led the Bears (22-5) to the Class AA state championship this past season, posting an 18-2 record with one save and a 1.23 earned run average while recording 258 strikeouts and issuing just 18 walks. A First Team All-State selection, MacDonald recorded three no-hitters and nine shutouts, allowing 74 hits in 142 innings. At the plate, she batted .443 with four home runs and six doubles, amassing a .684 slugging percentage.

MacDonald has maintained an unweighted 3.19 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's German Club, she has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach and as part of multiple community-service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"The MacDonald girl no-hit us, and that was one of the most dominant high school pitching performances I've ever seen," said Kevin Callaghan, head coach of rival Hellgate High. "She had a bunch of pitches working: drop ball, curve, screwball—she was able to keep us off-balance. We struggled to make contact. She was unbelievable."

MacDonald 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.

MacDonald joins recent Gatorade Montana Softball Players of the Year DJ Johnson (2008-09, Hellgate), Maghan Yurek (2007-08, CMR) and Bobbie Lee (2006-07, CMR) 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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