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**LINCOLN SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Becca Changstrom of Lincoln Southwest High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year. Changstrom is the first Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln Southwest 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 Changstrom as Nebraska's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Changstrom 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 state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Changstrom produced a 33-2 record with a 0.19 ERA and 482 strikeouts in 226.1 innings this past season, leading the Silverhawks (37-2) to a second consecutive Class A state championship. The 5-foot-5 senior right-handed pitcher also batted .452 with 21 RBI and holds or shares 18 school records. A National Fastpitch Coaches Association Second Team All-America selection, Changstrom was named Captain of the *Lincoln Journal-Star* Super State Team and the *Omaha World-Herald* All-Nebraska team in each of the last two seasons.

Changstrom has maintained an unweighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of a shelter for battered women, a food bank and blood-donation drives.

"She's smart with her pitches and she throws the ball very hard," said Terry Graver, head coach of rival Elkhorn High. "She gets ahead of hitters and then forces them to swing at pitches they just can't get."

Changstrom has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Creighton University 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.

Changstrom joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year Ashley Hagemann (2007-08 & 2006-07, Elkhorn) 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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