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**RANCOCAS VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY 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 Lauren Gaskill of Rancocas Valley Regional High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year. Gaskill is the first Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rancocas Valley Regional 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 Gaskill as New Jersey's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Gaskill 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-4 junior shortstop batted .684 with 42 runs scored, 31 RBI, 23 stolen bases, 10 home runs, 10 doubles and eight triples this season, leading the Red Devils (19-7) to the Group IV sectional semifinals, where they eventually fell to East Brunswick, 8-5. A returning Second Team All-State selection as named by *The Star-Ledger*, Gaskill produced a 1.421 slugging percentage and a .733 on-base percentage. As a sophomore, she finished with a .567 batting average, 32 runs scored and 22 stolen bases.

Gaskill has maintained a 4.09 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's varsity club, which promotes leadership in the Rancocas Valley High community, she has also volunteered on behalf of the Special Olympics and as a youth softball instructor.

"Lauren is a player that you may only get to see once in a lifetime," said Rancocas Valley Head Coach Erin Mattio. "Her offensive game sets her apart. Running a 4.9-second 40-yard dash, she can use her speed, or she can hit the ball over a 250-foot fence as she did this season. Defensively, she'd love to play her true position of centerfield, but as a pure athlete, she's so dynamic at shortstop. However, what sets her apart the most is her modesty and leadership. Lauren is an amazing teammate and above all else a class act."

Gaskill has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at the Virginia Tech beginning in the fall of 2011.

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.

Gaskill joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Softball Players of the Year Brittany O'Donnell (2008-09 & 2007-08, Red Bank) and Lyndsey PeQueen (2006-07, Toms River East) 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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