

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)

**CENTRAL YORK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® PENNSYLVANIA 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 Walker of Central York High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Player of the Year. Walker is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Central York 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 Walker as Pennsylvania's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Walker 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 right-handed pitcher finished 12-7 with a 0.52 ERA this season, leading the Panthers (12-9) to the Class AAAA district tournament. A returning Class AAAA Honorable Mention All-State selection as named by the Pennsylvania Softball Coaches Association, Walker recorded 267 strikeouts and issued just 23 walks in 122 innings this season, batting .600 with 27 runs scored, 24 RBI and nine home runs. Also a 2008 First Team All-State honoree, she helped lead Central York to the Class AAAA state semifinals as a freshman.

Walker has maintained a 4.30 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and her school's Varsity, Leadership and Character clubs, she has volunteered locally on behalf of her church, as a youth softball instructor and as part of multiple food drives to benefit the homeless.

"She's the most gifted and hardest worker on our team," said Central York Head Coach Barry Brenneman. "It's very, very unusual for this county to have somebody with the talent she has. She's also the first one out on the field, the first one out of the dugout every inning and the last one to leave practice. She's the heart of our team. If she's not on the mound, we're a totally different team. I could give you all the numbers, but to me what makes her special is the way she handles herself and the fact that she is very humble about it all."

Walker has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Walker joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Players of the Year Nicole Smith (2008-09, Milton Area), Alexa Bryson (2007-08, Greater Latrobe) and Trish Melvin (2006-07, Vincentian Academy) 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.

###