

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Julie Mason (412-561-1014)**

**COVENTRY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Elise Fortier of Coventry High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year. Fortier is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Coventry 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 Fortier as Rhode Island's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Fortier 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 senior third baseman and pitcher owned a .485 batting average entering this week's Division I winner's-bracket semifinals against Westerly High. At the time of her selection, she had produced 14 doubles, four triples, 18 runs scored and 30 RBI to lead the Knotty Oakers to a 14-5 record this spring. Through 19 games this spring, Fortier posted an on-base percentage of .513 and a slugging percentage of .864. In the pitching circle, the four-time First Team All-State selection was 5-1 with a 3.50 earned run average.

Fortier has maintained an unweighted 3.40 GPA in the classroom. A four-year member of the Coventry High basketball team, she has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach and instructor.

"Elise Fortier is the best player in the state," said Chris Luppe, head coach of rival Westerly High. "She can pitch, she can play third, she can hit, she can play short if she had to. She gets pitched around more than anyone else. Her softball IQ is Einstein level. Fortier is smarter than any softball player I've ever seen."

Fortier has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Stony Brook University in New York 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.

Fortier joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Players of the Year Fallon Scorpio (2008-09, St. Mary Academy-Bay View) and Steph Morse (2007-08 & 2006-07, Warwick Veterans) 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).

###