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**KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® IOWA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 1, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Austin Christensen of Kennedy High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Iowa Baseball Player of the Year. Christensen is the second Gatorade Iowa Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kennedy 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 Christensen as Iowa's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Christensen joins an elite alumni association of past state baseball award winners, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-5, 210-pound senior left-handed pitcher, outfielder and first baseman led the Cougars (32-10) to the Class 4A state championship last season. Christensen posted a 9-4 record on the mound with one save, a 1.94 ERA and 86 strikeouts in 75.2 innings pitched. He also batted .492 with eight home runs, 44 RBIs and an .852 slugging percentage. A 2010 First Team All-State selection, Christensen was the winning pitcher in the Class 4A state final, tossing five innings and allowing just one run with seven strikeouts in an 11-1 win over Iowa City West.

Christensen has maintained a 3.19 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth baseball coach and on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with his church youth group.

"Austin Christensen is probably the best player we will see this year," said Dave Schemmel, head coach of rival Xavier High. "He is big, strong and highly competitive. I think he's a smart player who uses all of his skills to their full potential."

Christensen has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Christensen joins recent Gatorade Iowa Baseball Players of the Year Damek Tomscha (2009-10, North), Dean McArdle (2008-09; North), B.J. Hermsen (2007-08, West Delaware), and Jon Gilmore (2006-07, City), 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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