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**PALO VERDE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEVADA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Melissa McCormick of Palo Verde High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Nevada Softball Player of the Year. McCormick is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Palo Verde 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 McCormick as Nevada's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, McCormick 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-3 senior right-handed pitcher led the Panthers (33-9) to the Class 4A state championship this past season. McCormick posted a 23-8 record on the mound with a 2.04 ERA, striking out 222 in 182 innings. The Class 4A Player of the Year, she also batted .598 with four home runs and 57 RBI. McCormick was a four-time First Team All-State selection.

McCormick has maintained a weighted 3.99 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented singer, she has volunteered locally on behalf of youth softball teams, school book drives and a suicide prevention program.

"McCormick is a hard thrower with a good rise ball," said Mike Livreri, head coach of rival Centennial High. "She's confident, very smart and savvy. She's also a very tough out at the plate."

McCormick has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Maryland's Towson 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.

McCormick joins recent Gatorade Nevada Softball Players of the Year Karlyn Jones (2009-10, Spanish Springs), Chelsea Cohen (2008-09, Reed) and Mallary Darby (2007-08, Spanish Springs), 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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