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**HAMDEN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2010) — In its 25th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Chris FitzSimons of Hamden High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. FitzSimons is the second Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Hamden 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 track, distinguishes FitzSimons as Connecticut's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, FitzSimons joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-2 senior middle-distance runner won the 800-meter run with a time of 1:52.61 and anchored the winning 4x800-meter relay squad that finished in 7:51.32 to win at the State Open Outdoor Track & Field Championships this spring. A member of the gold medal distance medley relay team at the Nike Indoor Nationals this past winter, FitzSimons also won the 800-meter run and the 4x800-meter relay at the 2010 Class LL outdoor state meet. His state record time of 1:49.80 in the 800 at the Danbury Dream Invitational ranked No. 5 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of his selection. FitzSimons anchored the 4x800-meter relay squad in a record-breaking time of 7:40.48 at the New England Outdoor Track & Field Championships this season, the nation's No. 4 clocking entering this month's New Balance Outdoor Nationals.

FitzSimons has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered at the Tin Mountain Conservation Center in New Hampshire each of the last four summers.

"There's no doubt that what he did between his cross country, indoor track and outdoor track performances: he changed the local interest in our sport," said Hamden Head Coach John Sudusky. "What he was doing drew so much attention to what we are doing here in the sport. One of the most amazing things was that he was injured at the beginning of the outdoor season. Even with that injury, he was still able to tie the state record in the 800, and he was still able to have outstanding performances in the conference, division and state meets as well as New Englands."

FitzSimons has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Villanova University beginning 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.

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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