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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA 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 Brandon Barnes of Bismarck High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Barnes is the third Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Barnes as North Dakota'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, Barnes 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 5-foot-10, 140-pound senior distance runner won the 800-meter run and the 1600-meter run at the Class A state meet this spring, leading the Demons to their seventh consecutive Class A state team title. Barnes accounted for 27.5 team points at the state meet, winning the 800 with a time of 1:51.21 and the 1600 in 4:18.44, also running the anchor leg of the winning 4x400 team, which clocked a 3:25.80. Barnes was also the fastest runner in the 800 at the Dakota Relays, breaking the tape in 1:51.21, which ranked as the nation's No. 13 time among prep competitors at the time of his selection.

Barnes has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. He has devoted his spare time to a part-time job at a local Mexican restaurant and to his family's dog-breeding business.

"Brandon Barnes is a perfect example of what you can do when you work hard," said Bismarck High Head Coach Darrell Anderson. "He was never a middle school prodigy, but he really worked and climbed his way to the top and you can see how it has paid off. He always wanted to be great and he wasn't afraid to put in the hard work to get there."

Barnes has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Iowa State 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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