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**MORRISTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 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 Nick Vena of Morristown High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Vena is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Morristown 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 Vena as New Jersey'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, Vena 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 state's two-time returning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Vena launched a winning throw in the shot put of 69 feet, 10.5 inches in addition to placing second in the discus throw with an effort of 179 feet, 1 inch at the Meet of Champions this spring. The two-time National Scholastic Indoor Championships shot put title winner, the 6-foot-5 junior field athlete won the shot and discus at the Group III state meet this season to lead the Colonials to fourth place as a team. His effort of 72 feet, 10.5 inches in the shot put at the New Jersey Athletic Conference Championships broke the national junior record and ranked No. 1 in the country among prep competitors at the time of his selection. Vena ranks No. 5 in prep history in the shot and owns the national freshman and sophomore records in the event.

Vena has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and his school's peer-mentoring program, he has volunteered on behalf of the Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation at the National Junior Disability Championships as well as the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation Junior World Games. Vena has also donated his time locally as a youth track and field instructor and in association with a kindergarten literacy-outreach program.

"To me, this season was more impressive than even the first two," said Morristown Head Throws Coach Ron Davenport. "He was able to handle everything, even with such a major spotlight on him. His work ethic and determination separate him from everybody else. He will never cave. He's determined to fight with every throw. His work ethic is second to none. His determination to be great is the same in practice as it is in competition. It's unbelievable. He never, ever gives in."

Vena will begin his senior year of high school 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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