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**EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Justin Welch of Eastwood High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Welch is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Eastwood 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 Welch as Ohio'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, Welch 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 swept the shot put and discus at the Division II state meet this past season, launching the discus 197 feet, 1 inch and hurling the shot 62 feet, 11.75 inches. A seven-time state champion, Welch's season-best discus throw of 202 feet ranked fifth in the nation at the time of his selection. He also had the nation's top hammer throw of 245 feet, 4 inches, the fourth-best high school distance of all-time.

Welch has maintained an unweighted 3.08 GPA in the classroom. An active member of his Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer and track programs.

"Justin is small compared to most throwers, but he's very quick in the throwing ring and generates a ton of power," said Eastwood Head Coach Gary White. "He has a great work ethic and he really performs under pressure."

Welch has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Georgia 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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