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**LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Brandon Franklin of Liberty High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Franklin is the first Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Liberty 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 Franklin as West Virginia'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, Franklin 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, 150-pound sophomore won three events at the Class AA state meet this spring, leading the Falcons to fourth place as a team. Franklin broke the tape in the 200-meter dash with a time of 22.19 seconds, won the 400-meter dash in 49.40 and captured the long jump with a leap of 21 feet, 6.25 inches. He also placed third in the 100-meter dash in 11.24 seconds. Franklin is already Liberty's school record-holder in the 100, 200, 400 and long jump, and he was the high-point man at the Class AA state meet.

Franklin has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and maintaining lawns for elderly neighbors.

"Brandon Franklin is just so dominant," said Scott Furey, head coach of rival Keyser High. "As a sophomore, he's jumping 21 feet in the long jump, and he has just unworldly times in the sprints. He's just a little kid. He doesn't look like he's 24 years old, he hasn't been lifting weights forever, he's just a kid. He's running fast and it's fun to watch."

Franklin will begin his junior 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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