

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**ABINGTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Leah Nugent of Abington Senior High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Nugent is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Abington Senior 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 Nugent as Pennsylvania's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Nugent joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The 5-foot-8 senior won the 300-meter intermediate hurdles in a state-record time of 41.10 seconds at the Class 3A state championship meet this spring, leading the Galloping Ghosts to a second-place finish as a team. Nugent also anchored the 4x400-meter relay quartet to a championship in another state-record time of 3:46.20. Her state-meet performance in the 300 hurdles ranked as the nation's No. 3 mark among prep competition in 2011 at the time of her selection. Nugent won the 400-meter hurdles at this month's New Balance Outdoor Nationals in 57.72.

Nugent has maintained a 3.35 GPA in the classroom. A youth leader and Bible teacher in her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics.

"Leah is an exceptional athlete who has an unmatched work ethic," said Abington High Sprint Coach Karl Gaines. "She's an amazing competitor, but she's also a leader. She's that athlete you can depend on every time she steps on the track."

Nugent has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Virginia Tech 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.

Nugent joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Shelley Black (2009-10, Coughlin), Fawn Miller (2008-09, Lakeview), and Chanelle Price (2007-08, Easton Area) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

###