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**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 23, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Joseph Williams of Spain Park High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Williams is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Spain Park 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 Williams as Alabama'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, Williams joins an elite alumni association of 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.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-1 junior launched the discus 185 feet, one inch and threw the shot put 52-5 to win both events at the Class 6A state championship meet this spring. Williams also won the sectional championships in both events and was undefeated in each during the 2011 season.

Williams has maintained a 4.20 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria. A youth leader in his church community and a student representative in his school, he has raised funds to build wells in African villages and has participated in a mission trip to Costa Rica. He has also volunteered locally on behalf of the Oak Mountain Missions Ministries, which provides food, clothing and essential items to community members in need.

"Joe is the most driven athlete I have ever coached," said Spain Park High head coach Michael Zelwak. "His work ethic and determination have paid off with two successful seasons, and I'm eager to see what he will set his mind to accomplish next season."

Williams 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Keenan Brock (2009-10, Carver), Patrick McGregor (2008-09, Hoover), and Kyle Smith (2007-08, Daphne) 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.

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