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**NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 John Wlasuk of Newtown High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Wlasuk is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Newtown 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 Wlasuk as Connecticut'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, Wlasuk joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meh 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-2 senior won the shot put and the discus at the New England Interscholastic Track & Field Outdoor Championship Meet this spring. Wlasuk launched the discus 179 feet, 10 inches and hurled the shot 57 feet, 11 inches. A returning Class LL All-State selection as named by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, Wlasuk also captured the discus and shot put titles at both the State Open and Class LL state meet. He took seventh in the shot put (57-6.5), 14th in the javelin (162-7) and 16th in the discus (149-3) at the New Balance Outdoor Nationals earlier this month. Wlasuk also placed first in the shot put competition at the New England Interscholastic Indoor Track & Field Championships this past winter.

Wlasuk has maintained a 3.19 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

"John is an extremely dedicated athlete," said Newtown High head coach Daniel McIlrath. "He watches video clips of professionals as well as himself. He analyzes and picks apart pieces of the form so he can see what works and how it comes together to combine strength with fluidity. John is also an extremely intense athlete. He puts his heart and soul into each throw, and it shows when he screams. That is his release, his energy and his love of what he does. When you combine dedication with a large competitive drive to better yourself, you get strong results."

Wlasuk has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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.

Wlasuk joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Chris FitzSimons (2009-10, Hamden), Cas Loxsom (2008-09, Wilbur Cross), and Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury) 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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