

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)

**LAKE PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Zach Ziemek of Lake Park High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ziemek is the third Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lake 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 Ziemek as Illinois' 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, Ziemek 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-4 senior won three individual state championships this spring and led the Lancers to the Class 3A state championship as a team. Ziemek soared 50 feet, 6.75 inches to capture the triple jump, the nation's No. 5 distance among prep competitors in 2011 at the time of his selection. He also cleared 16-6 to claim the pole vault title and leapt 23-8 to finish first in the long jump.

Ziemek has maintained a 4.40 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, Meals on Wheels and youth track programs.

"Zach was always willing to do whatever events would help the team most," said Lake Park High head coach Jay Ivory. "He's not just a vocal leader, but also a leader by example, and no one worked or trained harder than he did."

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

Ziemek joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Logan Pflibsen (2009-10, Streator Township), Dan Block (2008-09, Lake Park), and Mat Smoody (2007-08, Palatine) 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.

###