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**DETROIT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Dartis Willis of Detroit Country Day School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Willis is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Detroit Country Day 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 Willis as Michigan'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, Willis 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 senior won the high jump with a clearance of six feet, 11 inches at the Division 2 Lower Peninsula Track & Field Finals this spring, leading the Yellowjackets to a third-place finish as a team. The state record-holder in the indoor high jump, Willis also finished third in the long jump this outdoor season. His season-best high jump of 7-2 ranked as the nation's No. 2 clearance among prep competitors in 2011 at the time of his selection.

Willis has maintained a 3.36 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented saxophonist, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track programs.

"Through extraordinary hard work and dedication, Dartis has made a tremendous amount of improvement in the high jump since his freshman year," said Detroit Country Day head coach David Wilson. "He's a very gutsy and team-oriented athlete and has distinguished himself as a tremendous leader."

Willis has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Stanford University 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.

Willis joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Omar Kaddurah (2009-10, Grand Blanc), Michael Atchoo (2008-09, Troy), and Tommy Brinn (2007-08, Otsego) 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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