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**OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 23, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Sam Kendricks of Oxford High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Kendricks is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Oxford 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 Kendricks as Mississippi'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, Kendricks 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-2 senior cleared a state-record 16 feet, three inches to capture the pole vault at the Class 5A state championship meet this spring, leading the Chargers to a second-place finish as a team. Selected as Mississippi's Boys Track and Field PopStar, Kendricks also won the indoor state championship in the pole vault. His season-best outdoor vault of 17 feet ranked as the nation's No. 7 clearance among prep competitors in 2011 at the time of his selection.

Kendricks has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church youth group, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs and has participated in fundraisers for both breast cancer awareness and St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

"I had always hoped that some day he'd be able to jump 16 feet—that was the goal," said Oxford High head coach Scott Kendricks. "But once he did that, we realized he could go even higher. He's had four surgeries in the last 10 months and has had to endure a tremendous amount of hardship, but he's worked harder than any high school vaulter I've ever known."

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

Kendricks joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Marcus Jackson (2009-10, J.Z. George), Willie Calvin (2008-09, Greenville-Weston), and Morris Kersh (2007-08, Pearl) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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