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**DOUGLAS BYRD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE  
NORTH CAROLINA 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 Eric Winfrey of Douglas Byrd High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Winfrey is the second Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Douglas Byrd 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 Winfrey as North Carolina'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, Winfrey 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 5-foot-10 senior won the 400-meter run in 48.73 seconds and finished second in the 200 at the Class 3A state meet this spring, leading the Eagles to the state championship as a team. Winfrey also anchored the 4x400-meter relay quartet to first place in 3:24.14. A three-time state champion in the 400, his season-best times in the 100 and 200 both ranked among the nation's top 12 performances by prep competitors at the time of his selection.

Winfrey has maintained a weighted 3.91 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally feeding the homeless, assisting the elderly in his neighborhood and mentoring freshmen students in his school.

"Eric is successful in whatever he does," said Douglas Byrd High co-coach Tiffany Harris. "I've known him since middle school and track has really changed his life. He was always fast, but he listened and he put the work in. He's shown great dedication and that's made him a well-rounded student-athlete."

Winfrey has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Winfrey joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Isaac Presson (2009-10, Asheville), Wayne Davis (2008-09, Southeast Raleigh), and Dylan Ferris (2007-08, East Forsyth) 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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