

Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**WASILLA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Morgan Dampier of Wasilla High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Dampier is the first Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Wasilla 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 Dampier as Alaska's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Dampier joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Dampier won the 200-meter dash in 25.82 seconds, the 400-meter dash in 57.65 and the 800-meter run in 2:20.04 at the Class 4A state meet this spring, leading the Warriors to a second consecutive Class 4A state championship as a team. Twice named Class 4A state meet Outstanding Competitor, the 5-foot-6 senior sprinter and middle-distance runner also placed second in the 100-meter dash in 12.75 seconds. Dampier clocked a 2:10.98 in the 800-meter run at the Anchorage Invitational, which ranked as the nation's No. 54 time among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of her selection.

Dampier has maintained a 3.98 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to working on behalf of the state Division of Forestry, she has volunteered locally as part of clothing and canned food drives as well as a holiday gift-giving campaign. Raised in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, Dampier has also donated her time as a mentor, encouraging area youth to live healthy lifestyles and spread tolerance for diverse cultures.

"Morgan is a team player first," said Wasilla Head Coach Gary Howell. "While she has extraordinary talent and amazing work ethic, she will sacrifice her abilities for the betterment of the team. Her unassuming manner and personal attributes are inordinate for an athlete of her caliber. She is the hero of her team, yet she remains humble and willing to do what is in the best interest of everyone."

Dampier has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at California State University, Sacramento 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 ESPNHS 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.

Two-time winner Dampier joins recent Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Morgan Lierin Flanagan (2009-10, Kenai Central), Gabrielle Todd (2008-09, Bartlett), and Leah Francis (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas) 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.

###