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**CANYON DEL ORO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 Jaide Stepter of Canyon del Oro High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Stepter is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Canyon del Oro 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 Stepter as Arizona'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, Stepter 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 5-foot-7 senior sprinter, hurdler and field athlete won three individual state championships at the Division II state meet this spring, leading the Dorados to second place as a team. Also The Arizona Republic Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Stepter won the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.43 seconds, 300-meter hurdles in a state-record time of 42.01 seconds and long jump with a leap of 19 feet, three inches. She placed second in the 200-meter dash in 24.54 seconds. Stepter's 300-meter hurdles and long jump efforts at the state meet both ranked among the nation's top 25 performances by prep competitors in 2012 at the time of her selection.

Stepter has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 5 in her graduating class. In addition to donating her time as a youth athletic instructor and at multiple community track events in association with the mission to fight childhood obesity, she has volunteered on behalf of her church and the annual El Tour de Tucson.

"She's a heck of an athlete, and that's saying it mildly," said Steve Carney, head coach at rival Catalina Foothills High. "She's pretty awesome. Our schools are about 10 miles apart, and we face off in every sport you can imagine. She has an older sister, and when she graduated, I said, 'Oh, thank God.' Then, the very next year, out walks Jaide. And look out. She's done even more than her sister. She's been awesome. There isn't anything she can't do."

Stepter has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Southern California 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.

Stepter joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Hannah Carson (2010-11, Chandler High School), Jasmine Todd (2009-10, Chandler), Jessica Tonn (2008-09, Xavier College Prep.), and Hannah Carson (2007-08, Dobson) 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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