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**HOLY NAMES HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Sasha Wallace of Holy Names High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Wallace is the first Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Holy Names 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 Wallace as California'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, Wallace 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-9 junior hurdler and field athlete won the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 13.33 seconds and the triple jump with a leap of 41 feet, 5.75 inches at the California Interscholastic Federation state meet this spring, leading the Monarchs to sixth place as a team. The 2011-12 Bay Area News Group East Bay Female Athlete of the Year, Wallace's 100-meter hurdles time at the state meet and triple jump effort of 42 feet, 4.75 inches at the Mount Sac Relays each ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of her selection. Those efforts also respectively ranked as the No. 9 and No. 32 performances in U.S. prep history.

Wallace has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating her time to multiple youth leadership programs, she has volunteered locally at an assisted living facility, One Step Closer and the Oakland Bay Area Links service organization.

"She not only is a great athlete, but a person who puts being a champion in perspective," said Dennis Patrick, head coach at rival St. Patrick-St. Vincent High. "She exemplifies the phrase, 'To whom much is given, much is required.' She mentors up-and-coming athletes directly, through encouraging them, and indirectly, by the way that she carries herself. She is humble and very coachable. Because of this positive attitude, I believe the sky is the limit for this student-athlete."

Wallace will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Wallace joins recent Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Amy Weissenbach (2010-11, Harvard-Westlake School), Ashton Purvis (2009-10, Saint Elizabeth), Anna Jelmini (2008-09, Shafter), and Christine Babcock (2007-08, Woodbridge) 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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