

Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**THE TATNALL SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Haley Pierce of The Tatnall School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Pierce is the second Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from The Tatnall 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 Pierce as Delaware'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, Pierce 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, Pierce won the 1,600-meter run with a state-record time of 4:41.46 and the 3,200-meter run in 10:24.80 at the Meet of Champions this spring. Also a three-time Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-7 senior distance runner also ran the second leg of the third-place 4x400-meter relay squad that finished in 4:00.49. The two-time William A. Thomson Award winner as named by the New Castle County Coaches Cross Country & Track Association, Pierce concluded her career with individual state records in the 1,600-meter run, 3,000-meter run and the 3,200 meter run as well as the 4x800-meter relay, distance medley relay and 4x1600-meter relay.

Pierce has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's environmental club, she has volunteered on behalf of her church's youth group as well as the Sunday Breakfast Mission for the homeless.

"Haley Pierce is the top girls' track athlete in Delaware by far," said Steven Lantz, head coach at rival A.I. DuPont High. "She set state records in everything she ran. Pierce ran national-level times and keyed Tatnall's championship at Penn Relays in the distance medley relay."

Pierce has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Georgetown University 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 Pierce joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Celina Emerson (2009-10, Delcastle Technical), Juliet Bottorff (2008-09, The Tatnall School), and Brianna Kennedy (2007-08, Caravel Academy) 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.