

Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)

**LINCOLN-WAY EAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Aaliyah Brown of Lincoln-Way East High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Brown is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln-Way East 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 Brown as Illinois' 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, Brown 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-6 junior won the 200-meter dash with a time of 24.18 seconds at the Class 3A state championship meet this spring, leading the Griffins to a fourth-place finish as a team. Brown also took second in the 100-meter dash and anchored the 4x100-meter and 4x400-meter relays to runner-up finishes. She broke the tape in the 100 and 200 at the Arcadia Invitational in California and finished second in the adidas Dream 100 with a time of 11.44 seconds, which ranked as the nation's No. 4 time among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of her selection.

Brown has maintained 3.32 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track programs and the Special Olympics.

"Aaliyah is not afraid to set her goals high, because she knows that she has what it takes to achieve them," said Lincoln-Way East coach Caroline Gerritsen. "She is very mature for her age and motivates her teammates more than I have ever seen anyone do."

Brown will begin her 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.

Brown joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jena Hemann (2010-11, Central Community High School), Kelsey Card (2009-10, Carlinville), and Daniella Bunch (2007-08 & 2008-09, Mahomet-Seymour), 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.

###