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**WATERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MAINE 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 Bethanie Brown of Waterville High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Maine Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Brown is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Waterville 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 Maine'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, 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-3 junior distance runner won the 1,600-meter run with a class-record time of 4:55.23 and the 3,200-meter run in a class-record 10:34.79 at the Class B state meet this spring, leading the Purple Panthers to the state title as a team. Brown ran the second leg of the winning 4x400-meter relay squad that broke the tape in 4:06.77. She also swept the 1,600-meter run in a state-record 4:50.39 and the 3,200-meter run in 10:31.19 at the New England Interscholastic Outdoor Track & Field Championships, which ranked as the nation's No. 30 and No. 39 performances, respectively, among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of her selection.

Also a cross country standout and an avid writer of poetry, Brown has maintained a 4.31 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has received her school's Renaissance Award, presented to students who excel in academics, service and character on behalf of the nationwide Renaissance Program. A Student Ambassador for incoming transfer classmates, Brown also donated her time to promoting science in local fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms.

"Bethanie is a tremendous competitor and holds herself to a high standard in all areas of her life," said Waterville head coach Ian Wilson. "She does not avoid competition, but rather seeks better runners whenever possible. She embraces the opportunity to compete at a national level. Many athletes do not want to face greater competition, fearing their weaknesses may be exposed. Bethanie wants to know what she needs to improve upon, recognizing that the only way to know that is through better competition."

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 Maine Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Abbey Leonardi (2008-09, 2009-10 & 2010-11, Kennebunk High School), and Becky O'Brien (2007-08, Greely) 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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