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**ELDORADO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Gina Okoye of Eldorado High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Okoye is the first Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Eldorado 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 Okoye as New Mexico'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, Okoye 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-10 senior hurdler and jumper won the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.82 seconds, the triple jump with a leap of 38 feet, seven inches and the long jump (18 feet, nine and three quarter inches) this spring, leading the Eagles to a second-place finish as a team at the Class 5A state meet. Also the 2011-12 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Okoye was the top New Mexico competitor at the Great Southwest Classic, earning fourth place in the triple jump with a leap of 37 feet, seven and one quarter inches and fifth place in the 100 hurdles with a time of 14.84. Her triple jump leap at the state meet ranked as the nation's No. 61 mark by a prep competitor at the time of her selection.

Okoye has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and an area food bank.

"Gina Okoye is an exceptional athlete in the state of New Mexico," said Tim Flores, head coach at Cleveland High. "The scary thing is that she is just starting to realize how good she can be in track and field. She took it to another level this year and just kept getting better and better."

Okoye has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Weber State 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.

Okoye joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Julia Foster (2009-10 & 2010-11, Albuquerque Academy), Lesly Torres (2008-09, Los Lunas), and Skye Barnett (2007-08, Cibola) 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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