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**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Joseph Williams of Spain Park High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Williams is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Spain Park 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 Williams as Alabama's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Williams joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-1 senior won the discus with a throw of 189 feet, 6.25 inches and the shot put with a mark of 58 feet, six inches at the Class 6A state championship meet this spring, leading the Jaguars to a third-place finish as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Williams was also named the Birmingham Kiwanis Club Co-Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year.

Williams has maintained a 4.25 GPA in the classroom. A youth leader in his church community and a student representative in his school, he has raised funds to build wells in African villages and has participated in mission trips to Costa Rica, Haiti and Uganda.

"Joe is one of the hardest working athletes I have ever coached," said Spain Park High coach Michael Zelwak. "He brings a positive and competitive energy to everything he does, in such a way that he motivates and inspires everyone he is around."

Williams has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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 Williams joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Keenan Brock (2009-10, Carver), Patrick McGregor (2008-09, Hoover), and Kyle Smith (2007-08, Daphne) 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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