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**OAK PARK RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Carl Heinz of Oak Park River Forest High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Heinz is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Oak Park River Forest 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 Heinz as Illinois' 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, Heinz 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-2 senior captured the Class 3A state championship in the high jump this spring with a clearance of 7 feet, one inch, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection. It was the second straight state title for Heinz, who also finished fifth in the triple jump and led the Huskies to a third-place finish as a team.

Heinz has maintained a 4.34 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of food and clothing drives, Ronald McDonald House Charities and a middle school drug awareness program.

"Carl epitomizes the role of competitor," said Oak Park-River Forest high jump coach Danielle Dobias. "He has consistently achieved athletic excellence. It's hard to imagine how high and far he will go."

Heinz has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Duke 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.

Heinz joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Zach Ziemek (2010-11, Lake Park High School), Logan Pflibsen (2009-10, Streator Township), Dan Block (2008-09, Lake Park), and Mat Smoody (2007-08, Palatine) 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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