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**NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 Futsum Zeinasellassie of North Central High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Indiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Zeinasellassie is the second Gatorade Indiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from North Central 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 Zeinasellassie as Indiana'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, Zeinasellassie 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 5-foot-8 senior broke a 37-year-old meet record and captured his fourth consecutive state title in the 3,200-meter run with a time of 8:51.15 this spring. The Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Zeinasellassie also won the 3,200 at California's Arcadia Invitational in a record time of 8:47.75 for an Indiana prep, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection.

Zeinasellassie has maintained a B average in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, where his father is a pastor, he has volunteered with youth track programs and raised funds to benefit a school in Kenya. Zeinasellassie emigrated to the United States from the east African nation of Eritrea (AIR-ih-treeah) as a seventh grader.

"It's been a humbling experience just working with Futsum," said North Central distance coach Byron Simpson. "He always does the right thing and he's always been supportive of everyone else. He's a kid who I think has a whole lot more left in him."

Zeinasellassie has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Northern Arizona 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.

Zeinasellassie joins recent Gatorade Indiana Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Austin Mudd (2009-10 & 2010-11, Center Grove High School), Corey Shank (2008-09, Northrop), and Kevin Schipper (2007-08, Bishop Dwenger) 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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