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**BLUE VALLEY NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Jonny Giess of Blue Valley Northwest High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Giess is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Blue Valley Northwest 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 Giess as Kansas' 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, Giess 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-6 senior captured the high jump at the Class 6A state championship meet this spring with a clearance of six feet, 10 inches. Giess also won a regional championship with a jump of seven feet, one inch, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection.

Giess has maintained a 4.08 GPA in the classroom. Also a basketball standout, he has volunteered locally on behalf of tornado disaster relief, an area homeless shelter and the Special Olympics.

"Jonny's work ethic has paid off and he has earned everything that is coming his way," said Blue Valley Northwest coach Dwight Williams. "It's remarkable to see how far he has come as a young man and as an athlete. I'm looking forward to seeing what he will do with his future."

Giess remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Giess joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Macauley Garton (2010-11, Mill Valley High School), Johannes Swanepoel (2009-10, Shawnee Mission South), Adonis Saunders (2008-09, Olathe North), and John Talbert (2007-08, Kansas City East Christian Academy) 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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