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**POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Dondre Echols of Potomac High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Echols is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Potomac 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 Echols as Maryland'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, Echols 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, 170-pound senior hurdler won the 110-meter hurdles with a state-record time of 13.59 seconds and the 300-meter hurdles in a state-record 36.26 at the Class 3A state meet this spring, leading the Wolverines to the state title as a team. The Washington Post All-Met Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Echols ran the second leg of the 4x100-meter relay squad that broke the tape in a state-record 41.08, and he placed second in the 100-meter dash in 10.62. His 110 hurdles time at the state meet and 300 hurdles time of 13.56 at the USA Track & Field Junior Outdoor Championships each ranked among the nation's top five performances by prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection.

Also a football standout, Darby has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to regularly donating his time as a youth track and football instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the Special Olympics and as a peer science tutor.

"From the day I met Dondre as a bean-pole freshman, I knew that he was destined for hurdle greatness," said Potomac High head coach Fatumatu Abbas. "In the subsequent years, I watched Dondre grow into his body and grow into a fine young scholar-athlete. I do not think I have met any other athlete with the level of commitment and dedication that Dondre displays on the track."

Echols has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Echols joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ronald Darby (2010-11, Potomac High School), Marquis Woodyard (2008-09 & 2009-10, Governor Thomas Johnson), and Jon Hill (2007-08, Walkersville) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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