

**Contact: Adam Woullard (312-729-3627)**

**PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 Rilwan Alowonle of Park High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Alowonle is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from 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 Alowonle as Minnesota'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, Alowonle 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-11, 145-pound senior hurdler, jumper and sprinter won individual state titles in the 110-meters hurdles with a time of 14.04 seconds, the 300-meter hurdles in 36.59, the triple jump with a leap of 47 feet, 11 inches and ran the second leg of the first-place 4x100-meter relay this spring, leading the Wolfpack to a second place finish as a team at the Class AA state meet. A two-time First Team All-State honoree, Alowonle's season-best time at the state meet broke a 25-year-old state record in the 300 hurdles, and he also set a state record in the 110 hurdles with a time of 13.88 at the state meet preliminary race. His top mark in the 300 hurdles ranked as the nation's No. 5 time among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection.

Alowonle has maintained a 4.20 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of his school's Link Crew program, mentoring and tutoring incoming freshman students.

"Rilwan Alowonle is a peerless track and field athlete," said Jim Scott, head coach at Woodbury High. "Just when you think he is going to get tired, he flies by guys like they are standing still. It was truly an honor to watch him compete over the years and see the development in his speed and athleticism."

Alowonle has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at the University of North 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.

Alowonle joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Mason Ferlic (2010-11, Mounds Park Academy), Macauley Spandl (2009-10, Moorhead), Casey Dehn (2008-09, Owatonna), and Zach Mellon (2007-08, Buffalo) 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).

###