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**OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Justin Fondren of Oxford High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Fondren is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Oxford 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 Fondren as Mississippi'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, Fondren 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 won the high jump at the Class 5A state championship meet for the third time, soaring 7 feet and leading the Chargers to a fourth-place finish as a team. The state-record holder in the high jump, Fondren also took the bronze medal at the World Youth Championships in 2011 and his season-best clearance of 7 feet, 0.25 inches ranked as the nation's No. 4 jump among prep competitors in 2012 at the time of his selection.

Fondren has maintained a B average in the classroom. Also a talented musician, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball camps.

"Justin has been the best high school high jumper in the country for over two years," said Oxford High Head Coach Scott Kendricks. "He's set a high standard for behavior, leadership and competitiveness for his teammates to follow."

Fondren has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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.

Fondren joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Sam Kendricks (2010-11, Oxford High School), Marcus Jackson (2009-10, J.Z. George), Willie Calvin (2008-09, Greenville-Weston), and Morris Kersh (2007-08, Pearl) 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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