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**CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Jacob Burcham of Cabell Midland High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Burcham is the first Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Cabell Midland 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 Burcham as West Virginia'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, Burcham 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.).

A two-time Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year and the returning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-10, 153-pound junior won the 800-meter run, the 1,600-meter run and the 3,200-meter run for a second straight year at the Class AAA state meet, leading the Knights to second place as a team. Burcham broke his own state record in the 3,200 with a time of 8:57.73, tied his state record in the 800 (1:54.01) and nearly matched his own state record of 4:08.80 in the 1,600, settling for a 4:08.91. Burcham also placed second at the adidas Grand Prix Dream Mile on June 9 with a state-record time of 4:02.73 and followed that a week later by winning the mile at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor championships in 4:08.80.

Burcham has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. A member of his school's Interact Club, he has volunteered locally doing routine maintenance and errands for the elderly and as a youth track coach and mentor.

"Despite being a tremendous individual runner, Jacob puts the goals of his team first and his individual honors second," said Chris Parson, head coach of Cabell Midland High. "Jacob lets his accomplishments speak for themselves. He is the best high school distance runner in state history."

Burcham will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Two-time winner Burcham joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brandon Franklin (2009-10, Liberty), Zach Tennant (2008-09, North Marion), and Eric Myers (2007-08, Sissonville) 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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