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**EDWARDSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Emmonnie Henderson of Edwardsville High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Henderson is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Edwardsville 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 Henderson as Illinois's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Henderson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The 6-foot-2 senior won the Class 3A state championships in the shot put and discus this spring, hurling the shot a state-record 50 feet, 9.5 inches and throwing the discus 156-7 while leading the Tigers to a second-place finish as a team. Henderson's season-best shot put ranked as the nation's No. 6 performance among prep competitors in 2013 at the time of her selection, and her furthest discus throw of 167-8 ranked No. 7.

Henderson has maintained 3.58 GPA in the classroom. Also a basketball standout, she has volunteered on behalf of Feed My Starving Children, which supplies food for malnourished children around the world.

"Emmonnie proved that if you set your mind to it, you can accomplish anything," said Edwardsville head coach MiKala Thompkins. "She was never content with her performance. She always set out a plan to do better each time she competed. She was never satisfied until she achieved one goal and then set out for a new one."

Henderson has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in basketball and track and field on scholarship at the University of Louisville 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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Henderson joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Aaliyah Brown (2011-12, Lincoln-Way East High School), Jena Hemann (2010-11, Central Community High School), Kelsey Card (2009-10, Carlinville), Daniella Bunch (2008-09 & 2007-08, Mahomet-Seymour), and Egle Staisiunaite (2006-2007, Downers Grove South) 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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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