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**CLASSICAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Maddy Berkson of Classical High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Berkson remains the second Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Classical 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 Berkson as Rhode Island'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, Berkson 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 state's returning Gatorade Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-4 junior won the 1500 meters at the state meet this spring and led the Purple to a state title. Berkson, hampered earlier this spring by a health issue, also ran the second leg for Classical's winning 4x400-meter relay quartet and placed third in both the 800-meter run and the 3000-meter run. At the New Balance Nationals Outdoor, Berkson placed third in the 800 with a state-record time of 2:08.40, which ranked as the nation's No. 12 performance among prep competitors in 2013 at the time of her selection. She holds five state records and her best times in the mile (5:02.01), 1500 (4:34.27) and 3000 (10:09.86) all rank in the top 100 nationally this spring.

Berkson has maintained an unweighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a lab technician in her Advanced Placement Biology class and at youth track events.

"In the early months of the spring season it was a little rough because she wasn't feeling 100 percent," said Mike Green, head coach of Classical High. "She made huge jumps in the past five weeks. Within that five-week span, she really turned herself around and had some great results."

Berkson will begin her 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 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.

Berkson joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Aleide Fernandes (2010-11, Central Falls High School), Molly Reilly (2009-10, South Kingstown), Eryn Wheeler (2008-09, Coventry), and Victoria Flowers (2007-08 & 2006-2007, Classical), 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.

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