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**HIGHLANDS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 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 Connor Turnage of Highlands Ranch High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Colorado Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Turnage is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Highlands Ranch 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 Turnage as Colorado'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, Turnage 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 junior won the triple jump with a leap of 48 feet, 8.5 inches at the Class 5A state meet this season. An All-Colorado selection as named by The Denver Post, Turnage also placed second in the long jump in 22-3 and ran the second leg of the seventh-place 4x100-meter relay squad that finished in 42.92 seconds. His second-place triple jump performance of 49-0.5 at the Great Southwest Classic ranked No. 11 among U.S. prep competitors in 2013 at the time of his selection. Turnage also won the triple jump as a sophomore at the 2012 Class 5A state meet.

Turnage has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to serving as manager of his school's store as part of the DECA entrepreneurial leadership program, he has coordinated a can drive to benefit a local homeless shelter and led fundraising efforts to assist victims of the Boston Marathon bombings.

"Connor Turnage is obviously a great athlete, and he is a lot of fun to watch," said John Reyes, head coach of rival ThunderRidge High. "He is very well coached, and has outstanding form for an athlete his age. One can tell that he is knowledgeable about his event from his approach to all three phases of his triple jump. He takes track and field very seriously, and he is not simply relying on athletic ability, which is why he is so fun to watch."

Turnage 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 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.

Turnage joins recent Gatorade Colorado Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Raymond Bozmans (2011-12, Fort Collins High School), Connor Winter (2010-11, Arapahoe High School), Trevor Brown (2009-10, Wasson), Mason Finley (2008-09 & 2007-08, Buena Vista), and Jeremy Rankin (2006-2007, Overland) 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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