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**PICKERINGTON HIGH SCHOOL NORTH STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 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 Desmond Palmer of Pickerington High School North as its 2012-13 Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Palmer is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Pickerington High School North.

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 Palmer as Ohio'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, Palmer 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-5, 185-pound senior won two individual events and anchored two winning relays at the Division 1 state championship meet this spring, leading the Panthers to a second-place finish as a team. Palmer won the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.03 seconds and the 300-meter intermediate hurdles in 36.31, which ranked as the nation's No. 3 performance among prep competitors in 2013 at the time of his selection. The 4x200 relay quartet won in 1:26.14 and the 4x400 relay squad was victorious in 3:14.73, with both performances ranking among the nation's top 20.

Palmer has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of a car seat and safety belt educational campaign and a summer camp for disadvantaged youth.

"Desmond has great talent and ability athletically, but it's his character that I will remember long after he's gone," said Pickerington North head coach David Spring. "He's the most humble, hard-working and coachable athlete I have had in many years."

Palmer has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh 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.

Palmer joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Donovan Robertson (2011-12 & 2010-11, Berea High School), Justin Welch (2009-10, Eastwood), Danny Neff (2008-09, Butler), Cory Leslie (2007-08, Perkins), and Jimmie Pacifico (2006-2007, Butler) 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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