

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Charlie Ionata of Barrington High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ionata is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Barrington 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 Ionata as Rhode Island'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, Ionata 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-3, 195-pound senior won the hammer throw with a toss of 240 feet, 5 inches at the All-State Meet, leading the Eagles to a fourth-place finish as a team. Ionata also placed second in the discus (159-8) and the javelin (185-11) and fourth in the shot put (50-1). The 2013 New Balance Nationals Outdoor runner-up in the hammer, his season-best effort of 241-0 in the event ranked as the No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2013 at the time of his selection.

Ionata has maintained a 3.25 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a coach and official at youth and middle school track meets.

"Charlie has done some unbelievable things, without a doubt," said Bob Palazzo, head coach of Classical High. "He's the persona of the old-school thrower. He throws everything and he throws everything well. In the world of specialization, that to me stands out."

Ionata has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at Wake Forest University 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.

Ionata joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Joe Velez (2011-12, Classical High School), Jarell Forbes (2010-11, Classical High School), Kadeem Kushimo (2009-10, La Salle Academy), Andrew Springer (2008-09 & 2007-08, Westerly), and Jake Keeling (2006-2007, Ponaganset) 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.

###