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**OSCAR SMITH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Michael Cherry of Oscar Smith High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Cherry is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Oscar Smith 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 Cherry as Virginia'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, Cherry 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-4 senior won the 400-meter dash at the Group AAA state meet in 46.02 seconds, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2013 at the time of his selection. Cherry also placed third in the 200-meter dash in 21.55 and ran the anchor leg for the Tigers' 4x400-meter relay quartet that finished fourth, helping Oscar Smith to a third-place finish as a team. The two-time winner in the 400 at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor, Cherry is the national record-holder in the indoor 300-meter dash with a time of 33.05 seconds, which he set at the state indoor meet in March.

Cherry has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and mentor.

"The one word that describes Michael Cherry is special," said Justin Byron, Cherry's coach with the Five Star Track Club. "The Cherry effect reaches deeper than his personal-bests. Every time I attend a meet from Maryland to North Carolina, you hear his name mumbled in conversations. Or whenever I tell a coach I'm from Virginia they always ask, 'Do you know that Michael Cherry kid?' His effect on the area has been enormous."

Cherry has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at Florida State 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.

Cherry joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ahmed Bile (2011-12, Annandale High School), Isaiah Simmons (2010-11, Woodbridge High School), Darrell Wesh (2009-10, Landstown), Tyler Stutzman (2008-09, Western Albemarle), and Peter Dorrell (2007-08 & 2006-07, Blacksburg) 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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