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**THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jaalen Jones of Thompson High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Jones is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Thompson 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 Jones as Alabama'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, Jones 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, 175-pound senior won the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.76 seconds and the 200-meter dash in 21.17 at the Class 6A state championship meet this spring. Jones also won the 100 at the Sugar Bowl Classic and the Mobile Challenge of Champions, and his season-best clocking of 10.35 ranked as the nation's No. 7 performance among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of his selection.

Jones has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, Jones has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth track programs.

"Jaalen is a coach's dream, a hard-working, humble athlete with a good academic foundation," said Thompson head coach Michael Montgomery. "He's a winner in every sense of the word."

Jones has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Miami 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.

Jones joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Grant Hill (2012-13, Huntsville High School), Joseph Williams (2011-12 & 2010 - 11, Spain Park High School), Keenan Brock (2009-10, Carver), Patrick McGregor (2008-09, Hoover), Kyle Smith (2007-08, Daphne), and Julio Jones (2006-2007, Foley) 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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