

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**PAPILLION-LA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 Kenzo Cotton of Papillion-La Vista High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Cotton is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Papillion-La Vista 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 Cotton as Nebraska'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, Cotton 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-2, 195-pound senior sprinter won a pair of individual state championships this spring and led the Monarchs to a second-place finish as a team at the Class A state meet. Cotton captured victory in the 200-meter dash with a time of 21.91 seconds and the 400-meter dash in 47.66, which ranked as the nation's No. 60 performance among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of his selection. The state's two-time returning Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, he became the state's first athlete in more than 100 years to win four all-class gold medals in one event after winning the 200 with the fastest time in all competitive classifications for the fourth straight year.

Cotton has maintained a 3.82 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Open Door Mission, an annual school carnival and as a youth football and track & field coach.

"Kenzo Cotton is so consistent as an athlete," said Brent Litz, head coach at Bellevue West High. "Any sprint event he was in, you knew he would win. As an opposing coach you had to try to game plan where to put kids to get as many points as possible because you knew if Cotton was in a race, you were competing for second."

Cotton has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track & field on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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.

Three-time winner Cotton joins Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ted Lampkin (2010 - 11 & 2009-10, Omaha Central High School), Mitchell Hunt (2008-09, Fremont), Brett Maher (2007-08, Kearney), and Todd Gulizia (2006-2007, Millard South) 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.

###