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**HOPKINS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Joe Klecker of Hopkins High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Klecker is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Hopkins 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 Klecker as Minnesota'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, Klecker 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, 150-pound senior distance talent captured two individual state championships this spring and led the Royals to a third-place finish as a team at the Class AA state meet. Klecker set a state record in the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:06.54 and also took first in the 3200 in 8:57.76. A First Team All-State selection, he earned fourth-place in the mile at the prestigious Adidas Grand Prix, crossing the line in 4:04.13, which ranked as the nation's No. 5 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Klecker has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. A devoted parishioner in his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving Children and as a youth track & field coach.

"Since the eighth grade, it became evident that Joe Klecker would be a top distance runner," said Hopkins head coach Nick Lovas. "His senior season has been stellar. His success this year can be attributed to his motivation and extreme focus for his long-term goals. His championship at the state meet this year was truly six years in the making."

Klecker has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Colorado 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.

Klecker joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Payton Otterdahl (2013-14, Rosemount High School), Matt Neururer (2012-13, Pillager High School), Rilwan Alowonle (2011-12, Park High School), Mason Ferlic (2010-11, Mounds Park Academy), Macauley Spandl (2009-10, Moorhead), Casey Dehn (2008-09, Owatonna), Zach Mellon (2007-08, Buffalo), and Jerrell Hancock (2006-07, Anoka) 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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