

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**UNION CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Taylor McLaughlin of Union Catholic High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. McLaughlin is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Union Catholic 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 McLaughlin as New Jersey'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, McLaughlin 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, 170-pound senior won the 400-meter intermediate hurdles with a time of 51.93 seconds and anchored the winning 4x400-meter relay quartet that broke the tape in 3:15.46 at the Meet of Champions this past season. Also The Star-Ledger's State Outdoor Track & Field Athlete of the Year, McLaughlin captured four individual titles earlier in the postseason at the Non-Public A Championships, sweeping the 200-meter dash in 21.45 seconds, the 400 in 47.63 seconds, the 110-meter high hurdles in 14.28 and the 400-meter hurdles in a meet-record 51.73. He concluded his career with seven national championships as a member of Union Catholic's relay squads.

McLaughlin has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom and has served as a member of both the National Honor Society and National Language Honor Society. In addition to donating his time as a youth track instructor, peer tutor and Union Catholic student ambassador, he has volunteered extensively on behalf of HOPE Worldwide, including his participation in Hurricane Sandy relief efforts and service-mission trips to Spain and the Dominican Republic.

"In my 11 years as coach at Union Catholic, I've never worked with such a well-rounded student-athlete," said Vikings head coach Mike McCabe. "Taylor maintains a difficult course load and trains extremely hard while continuing to find the time to perform church and service activities. He recognizes and appreciates his gifts, and he does his best to maximize them. Taylor is a once-in-a-lifetime student, athlete and person that I am grateful to have had the opportunity to coach."

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

McLaughlin joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Curtis Thompson (2013-14, Florence Township Memorial High School), Braheme Days Jr. (2012-13, Bridgeton High School), Sam Mattis (2011-12, East Brunswick High School), Nick Vena (2010-11, 2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Morristown High School), and Craig Forys (2006-07, Colts Neck) 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.

###