

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**MALLARD CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2015) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Keon Howe of Mallard Creek High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Howe is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Mallard Creek 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 Howe as North Carolina'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, Howe 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, 171-pound senior soared 6 feet, 10 inches to win the high jump and cleared 16 feet to capture the pole vault at the Class 4A state meet this spring, leading the Mavericks to the state championship as a team. Howe was named MVP of the Class 4A state meet and earned Charlotte Observer Track and Field Athlete of the Year honors. Both of his state championship marks ranked among the nation's top 35 prep performances in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Howe has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented musician and a member of DECA, he has volunteered as a percussion instructor for middle school students.

"Keon is the epitome of an individual you want to build a program around," said Mallard Creek coach Donald Littlejohn. "He's selfless and hard-working ... you wouldn't even know he won multiple state titles because he's so humble."

Howe has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte 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.

Howe joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Trentavis Friday (2013-14, Cherryville High School), John Crossley (2012-13, West Carteret High School), Craig Engels (2011-12, Ronald Reagan High School), Eric Winfrey (2010-11, Douglas Byrd High School), Isaac Presson (2009-10, Asheville), Wayne Davis (2008-09, Southeast Raleigh), Dylan Ferris (2007-08, East Forsyth), and Johnny Dutch (2006-07, Clayton High School) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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