

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Connor Bandel of Oxford High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Bandel is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Oxford 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 Bandel as Michigan'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, Bandel 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-4, 230-pound senior won the national championship in the discus with a throw of 202 feet, 7 inches at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor championships this past weekend. Bandel also won the discus at the Division 1 state meet with a mark of 198-11 and broke the state meet record in the shot put by launching it 67-5.75. His season-best throw of 204-2 in the discus and his state-record 68-10.75 in the shot put both ranked in the nation's top ten performances among prep competitors in 2016 at the time of his selection.

Bandel has maintained a 3.28 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of a school anti-bullying initiative.

"Connor doesn't settle on short-term goals," said Oxford coach Matt Johnson. "His motivation to excel drives him to the greatest level of achievement. He's an exceptional student-athlete and he's set his desire to be able to compete on an international stage."

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

Bandel joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School), Cullen Prena (2012-13, Walled Lake Central High School), Garret Zuk (2011-12, Lakeland High School), Dartis Willis (2010-11, Detroit Country Day School), Omar Kaddurah (2009-10, Grand Blanc High School), Michael Atchoo (2008-09, Troy High School), Tommy Brinn (2007-08, Otsego High School), and Josh Hembrough (2006-07, Forest Hills Northern 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.

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