

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**ALGOMA HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 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 Kennedy Blahnik of Algoma High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Blahnik is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Algoma 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 Blahnik as Wisconsin's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Blahnik joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The 5-foot-9 senior thrower won two individual state championships this spring and led the Wolves to a third-place finish as a team at the Division 3 state meet. Blahnik set a state-meet record in the discus with an effort of 161 feet, five inches and also took gold by launching the shot put 48 feet, eight inches. The state's two-time returning Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year and an eight-time individual state champion during her career, Blahnik ranked as the nation's No. 3 performer among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of her selection thanks to her season-best shot put throw of 169-2 at the Hilbert Regional meet.

Blahnik has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished saxophone player and a member of the National Honor Society, she has served as the treasurer of her graduating class and has volunteered locally as a vacation bible school counselor as well as on behalf of Students Promoting Leadership Among Teens.

"Kennedy Blahnik has time and again proven that she is a leader both in the athletic arena and outside of it," said Algoma High head coach Steve Schmiling. "Her academic achievements are on par with her athletics. She takes a great deal of pride in being an outstanding athlete in every sense of the word but she takes even more pride in being an outstanding student. She represents everything that is right with student-athletes today."

Blahnik has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at the University of Wisconsin 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 Blahnik joins Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Dezerea Bryant (2010 - 11 & 2009-10, Bradley Tech.), Brea Tinney (2008-09, Osceola), Megan Rennhack (2007-08, Dodgegeland), and Hannah Gronning (2006-2007, Shell Lake) 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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