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**BELLEVUE WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced **Chloe Akin-Otiko of Bellevue West High School** as its **2012-13 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Akin-Otiko is the second Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bellevue West 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 Akin-Otiko as Nebraska'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, Akin-Otiko 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-8 freshman sprinter and jumper won the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.00 seconds and the 200-meter dash in 24.52 this spring, leading the Thunderbirds to a fourth-place finish as a team at the Class A state meet. Akin Otiko also won the long jump with a leap of 18 feet, nine inches and ran the second leg for the 4x400-meter relay quartet, which broke the tape in 4:08.51. A 2013 First Team All-State selection, she broke a 20-year-old state record in the 200 and completed an undefeated season in both the 100 and the long jump.

Akin-Otiko has maintained a 5.25 GPA on a five-point scale in the classroom. A devoted member of her parish community, she has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group.

"Chloe Akin-Otiko reminds me of Jackie Joyner-Kersey," said Bellevue West High head coach Leigh Officer. "She is strong, resilient, gracious and extraordinarily talented. In my 25 years of teaching and coaching, I have never known a more beautiful kid, inside and out."

Akin-Otiko will begin her sophomore year of high school 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.

Akin-Otiko joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Clara Nichols (2011-12, Millard South High School), Aubree Worden (2010-11 & 2009-10, Scottsbluff High School), Kelli Budd (2008-09, Marian), Emily Sisson (2007-08, Millard North), and Natalie Willer (2006-2007, Elkhorn) 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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