

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)**

## **EUREKA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE MISSOURI GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 17, 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 Hannah Long of Eureka High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Long is the third Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Eureka 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 Long as Missouri'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, Long 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-7 senior distance runner won three individual state championships this spring and led the Wildcats to a ninth-place finish as a team at the Class 5 state meet. Long won the 800-meter run with a time of 2:08.87, the 1600-meter run in a state-record 4:40.15 and anchored the winning 4x800-meter relay quartet, breaking the tape in 9:15.22. The state's 2012-13 Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, her state-record clocking ranked as the nation's No. 3 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection.

Long has maintained a 4.22 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and an avid gardener, she has volunteered as part of a canned food drive as well as holiday gift-giving campaigns, in addition to donating her time to the Special Needs Soccer Association.

"Hannah Long runs with excellence and carries herself with a humility that is rarely seen from elite athletes at the high school level in this day and age," said Neal Blackburn, head coach at Rock Bridge High. "You can tell from afar that she makes the people around her better. Not just better runners, but better people. I believe that female distance running in the state of Missouri is in a better place because she has set a precedent of how a champion should conduct themselves, regardless of the spotlight that shines on them."

Long has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at Stanford University 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.

Two-time winner Long joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Taylor Werner (2013-14, Ste. Genevieve High School), Tianna Valentine (2011-12, Hazelwood East High School), Colleen Quigley (2010-11, Nerinx Hall), Tiffani McReynolds (2009-10, The Pembroke Hill School), Emily Sisson (2008-09, Parkway Central), and Alishea Usery (2007-08 & 2006-07, McCluer South-Berkeley) 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).

###