

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW MEXICO BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Jackson Morris of Albuquerque Academy** as its **2016-17 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Morris is the third Gatorade New Mexico Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Albuquerque Academy.

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 Morris as New Mexico'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, Morris joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 6-foot-5, 230-pound senior throws specialist won three gold medals at the Class 5A state meet this past season, helping the Chargers capture the state title as a team. Morris launched the javelin 195 feet, 10 inches to finish first, and added victories in the shot and discus with a career-best throw of 58-6 in the former and 179-0 in the latter. His career-best performances in both the javelin (204-10) and discus (188-6) this season ranked as the nation's No. 15 and No. 46 distances among prep competitors at the time of his selection. Morris concluded his prep track career as a three-time state champion in each of his throwing events as well as the state record-holder in the shot and discus.

An accomplished classical guitarist and a two-year letterman in basketball, Morris has donated his time on behalf of Albuquerque's Animal Humane Adoption Center, the Roadrunner Food Bank, the Galloping Grace Youth Ranch for equine therapy and the Special Olympics in addition to volunteering as a youth and masters track coach. "Jackson Morris is one of the best throwers I've seen over my 36 years in coaching," said Los Alamos High coach Bob Scott. "He's a fine young man and he competes hard and with dignity. He's truly a pleasure to watch."

Morris has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Colorado State University beginning 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Morris joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Alejandro Goldston (2015-16, Volcano Vista High School), Jackson Morris (2014-15, Albuquerque Academy), Mike Budick (2013-14, Volcano Vista High School), Luis Martinez (2012-13 & 2011-12, Sue Cleveland High School), Eric Fenton (2010-11, Hope Christian School), Warrick Campbell (2009-10, Highland High School), Curtis Beach (2008-09 & 2007-08, Albuquerque Academy), and Matthew Tebo (2006-07, El Dorado High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jackson will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants – one for each sport – will be announced throughout the year.

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.

###

