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**RIVER BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced DJ Ledell of River Bluff High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ledell is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from River Bluff 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 Ledell as South Carolina'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, Ledell 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 5-foot-11, 170-pound senior won the national championship in the triple jump at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor this past season. His personal-best leap of 50 feet, 6 inches ranked No. 4 in the nation among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection. Ledell won both the triple jump (49-1) and the long jump (23-10) at the Class AAAAA state meet, leading the Gators to a 10th-place finish as a team. It was his fourth straight state title in the triple jump across three different classifications.

Ledell has volunteered locally at a home for domestic abuse victims and has donated his time to flood relief clean-up in Lexington County. "Coaching DJ Ledell for four years has been such an honor and pleasure," said Racheed Gause, head coach of River Bluff High. "This young man is special and I've said that since day one of his high school career."

Ledell has maintained a 3.36 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Clemson 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.

Ledell joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Darrell Singleton (2015-16, West Ashley High School), Tavien Feaster (2014-15, Spartanburg High School), Jaylen Bacon (2013-14, Lower Richland High School), Griffie Loy (2012-13, Bishop England High School), Brandon Sanders (2011-12, 2009-10 & 2008-09, Dreher High School), Chris Brown (2010-11, Hanahan High School), Marcus Rowland (2007-08, Dorman High School), and Mauricus Brown (2006-07, Westside High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, DJ 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).