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**SMITHIGH SCHOOL STATION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Alonie Sutton of SmitHigh School Station High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Sutton is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from SmitHigh School Station 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 Sutton as Alabama'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, Sutton 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-6 senior jumper swept the long jump and triple jump at the Class 7A state championships this past season, setting Alabama prep girls records in both events and helping the Panthers to 8th place as a team. She soared 19 feet, 9.5 inches in the long jump, which ranked as the nation's No. 30 wind-legal mark among prep competitors in 2018. In the triple jump, Sutton launched herself 42.5, the nation's No. 4 wind-legal high school distance this spring.

Also a varsity basketball player, Sutton is an avid singer and piano player. She has donated her time as class treasurer for Smiths Station. "One of the best all-around jumpers in the country, Sutton delivered the finest performance of her career at the Alabama state meet by sweeping both 7A long jump and triple jump titles," said Erik Boal, editor for Dyestat.com. "She then more than held her own at the USATF Junior Outdoor Championships, placing third in the triple jump."

Sutton has maintained a 3.55 GPA in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Sutton joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Caitlyn Little (2016-17, Hoover High School), Brittley Humphrey (2015-16, Hoover High School), Kiara Williams (2014-15, Homewood High School), Jayla Kirkland (2013-14, Woodlawn High School), Carmen Carlos (2012-13, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), Lacey Dent (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Neal Tisher (2008-09, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Madeline Morgan (2007-08, Mountain Brook High School), and Mary Carleton Johnson (2006-07, St. Paul's Episcopal School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sutton 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.

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