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**CHANDLER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 Jai Gruenwald of Chandler High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Gruenwald is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Chandler 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 Gruenwald as Arizona'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, Gruenwald 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-8 senior led the Wolves to the state title at the Division I state meet this past season. Gruenwald swept the 100-meter hurdles, the 300-meter hurdles, the long jump and the triple jump at the Division I state meet, setting a state record with her leap of 20 feet, 6.75 inches in the long jump. Her top wind-legal distance of 20-2 this season ranked No. 3 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection. She also ranked nationally in the 300 hurdles (42.62 seconds, No. 39) and the 100 hurdles (14.10 seconds, No. 64) in 2018 and concluded her prep career with nine state titles.

Gruenwald helped organize a Teddy Bear drive to benefit children at Mercy Gilbert Medical Center and the Chandler CARE Center. She has also volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church and in association with the HOPE (Helping Other People Everywhere) Campaign. "At every meet we competed against Jai, she would constantly challenge our girls to perform at their best," said Cassandra Cline, head coach of Desert Vista High. "Jai stays focused and doesn't allow any distractions while she is competing."

Gruenwald has maintained a weighted 4.32 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at UCLA 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.

Gruenwald joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Allie Schadler (2016-17 & 2015-16, Rio Rico High School), Dani Jones (2014-15, Desert Vista High School), Ky Westbrook (2013-14 & 2012-13, Chandler High School), Jaide Stepter (2011-12, Canyon del Oro High School), Hannah Carson (2010-11, Chandler High School), Jasmine Todd (2009-10 & 2008-09, Chandler High School), Hannah Carson (2007-08, Dobson High School), and Natalie Johnson (2006-07, Xavier College Prep) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gruenwald 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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