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**WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Kennedy Simon of Westlake High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Georgia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Simon is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Westlake 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 Simon as Georgia'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, Simon 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 state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-5 senior won two individual titles and ran the second leg on two winning relay quartets at the Class 7A meet this past season, leading the Lions second place as a team. Simon broke the state record in the 400-meter dash with a time of 52.52 seconds, which is tied for the nation's fourth-fastest time by a prep girl in the event this spring. She also broke the tape in the 200-meter dash in 23.78, which ranked as the nation's No. 21 wind-legal clocking. The teen missed out on her fourth state title in the long jump, finishing third with a leap of 18 feet, 9.5 inches, but she led the 4x100 relay foursome to a state title in 45.79 and helped the 4x400 squad set a state record with a time of 3:44.28, which ranked No. 17 in the nation among high school teams this spring. The Lions' 4x100 squad ripped off a 45.79 at states, the nation's No. 11 time in 2018. Simon was named MVP of the state meet.

A member of the Desire to Inspire Mentoring Group, Simon has donated her time to the Special Olympics. She also serves with the HOSA international student organization carrying out its two-fold mission to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all. "Already one of the most versatile performers in the nation, Simon continued her run as one of the country's most complete sprinters thanks to her state record in the 400 dash," said Erik Boal, editor for Dyestat.com. "Simon also remained a consistent contributor in the long jump and relays, putting another state record on her resume in the process."

Simon has maintained a 91.86 average in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Two-time winner Simon joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Cassondra Hall (2015-16, Warner Robins High School), Candace Hill (2014-15 & 2013-14, Rockdale County High School), Kendell Williams (2012-13 & 2011-12, 2009-10, Kell High School), Chalonda Goodman (2008-09 & 2007-08, Newnan High School), and Brittany Long (2006-07, Therrell High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Simon 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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