

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**GLENBARD WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Katelynne Hart of Glenbard West High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Hart is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Glenbard West 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 Hart as Illinois' 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, Hart 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-3 sophomore won the 1600-meter run with a meet-record time of 4:47.36 and captured the 3200 with another record clocking of 10:12.96 at the Class 3A state meet this past season. The state's reigning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hart also ran the fastest mile time by a prep girl in state history (4:44.63) this spring. Her season-best effort of 9:52.02 in the 3200 ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection, and No. 3 in U.S. high school history.

Hart has volunteered locally on behalf of the Mawi Learning leadership group. "As well as Katelynn did in cross country, she might be an even better track runner," said Glenbard West distance coach Paul Hass. "What she's done is pretty incredible. There's always a target on her back, but she's really embraced that role and never succumbed to the pressure. She always runs her race and usually runs it to perfection."

Hart has maintained a 4.77 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Hart joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Kathleen Young (2016-17 & 2015-16, Warrensburg-Latham High School), Brittny Ellis (2014-15, Warren Township High School), Parker English (2013-14, Evanston Township High School), Emmonnie Henderson (2012-13, Edwardsville High School), Aaliyah Brown (2011-12, Lincoln-Way East High School), Jena Hemann (2010-11, Central Community High School), Kelsey Card (2009-10, Carlinville), Daniella Bunch (2008-09 & 2007-08, Mahomet-Seymour High School), and Egle Staisiunaite (2006-07, Downers Grove South High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hart 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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