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**MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Asia Poe of Madison Central High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Poe is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Madison Central 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 Poe as Mississippi'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, Poe 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 won a pair of individual titles at the Class 6A meet this past season, leading the Jaguars to second place as a team. Poe soared a state meet all-class best 18-feet to capture the long jump and launched herself 38-3.75 to take gold in the triple jump. Despite suffering an injury during the long jump, she added third-place points in the 100-meter hurdles and second-place points in the high jump. Poe also set a state Class 6A record in the triple jump with her personal-best leap of 40-5.75, which ranked as the nation's No. 38 distance among girls' prep competitors this spring. Her personal-best clearance of 5-9 in the high jump this season ranked No. 32 mark in the nation.

A member of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) as well as her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter and Minority Club, she has volunteered locally mentoring elementary school students. She has also donated her time officiating at area track meets and giving instruction to youth athletes at the Peak Performance Track Club. "A versatile talent possessing tenacity and determination, Asia helped will Madison Central to a second-place finish in the Mississippi 6A state final, the best team performance in her career," said Erik Boal, an editor for Dyestat.com. "She took on the challenge of competing in four individual events for the second year in a row at the final and increased her career haul to six state championships."

Poe has maintained an 85.27 average in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Mississippi State 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.

Poe joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Demi Washington (2016-17, Clinton High School), Monica Mosley (2015-16 & 2014-15, Clinton High School), Demi Washington (2013-14, Clinton High School), Zaria Tillman (2012-13, Hattiesburg High School), Erika Sisk (2011-12, Oxford High School), Taryn Hartfield (2010-11, Hattiesburg High School), Cory McGee (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Pass Christian High School), and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Poe 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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