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**ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Haley Rizek of St. Pius X High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Rizek is the first Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from St. Pius X 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 Rizek as New Mexico'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, Rizek 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 won a pair of individual titles at the Class 5A meet this past season, leading the Sartons to fourth place as a team. Rizek broke the tape in the 300-meter hurdles with a time of 45.02 seconds, then took gold in the javelin with a personal-best and state-record throw of 134 feet, 6 inches. At this month's Great Southwest Classic, she took fifth in the heptathlon with 4,292 points. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Rizek clocked New Mexico's fastest times in the 100 and 300 hurdles times this spring, including an all-class state record and personal-best 14.39 in the former, and her PR in the javelin ranked as the nation's No. 95 throw in 2018 among prep competitors at the time of her selection. She graduates as a four-time state champion in the 300 hurdles.

An active member of her school's campus ministry mission, Rizek also led a Make-A-Wish Foundation of America campaign that raised over \$10,000 in a single week. "It's hard to imagine someone with such a fun-loving and pleasant demeanor can be as fierce of a competitor as is Haley Rizek," said Albuquerque Academy head coach Adam Kedge, who coached 2008-09 Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year Curtis Beach. "She has competitive spirit and determination that is unmatched by her peers. Demonstrating a versatility and durability not often seen in top-end track athletes, she is equally talented in jumping, throwing and hurdling events. Her potential as a multi-discipline athlete is limitless and her heptathlon scores should explode in the years to come."

Rizek has maintained a 3.72 GPA in the classroom and will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall, where she will compete in track and field.

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 Rizek joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jennifer Ramirez (2015-16, Onate High School), Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), Lauren Martinez (2013-14, Eldorado High School), Jenna Thurman (2012-13, Del Norte High School), Gina Okoye (2011-12, Eldorado High School), Julia Foster (2010-11 & 2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Lesly Torres (2008-09, Los Lunas), Skye Barnett (2007-08, Cibola), and Alexandra Darling (2006-07, La Cueva) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rizek 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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