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**WAKEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Veronica Fraley of Wakefield High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Fraley is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Wakefield 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 Fraley as North Carolina'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, Fraley 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 national championship this spring, launching the discus 169 feet, four inches at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoor. Fraley also won the discus (142-2) and the shot put (47-2) at the Class 4A state meet. Her season-best effort of 175-9 in the discus broke the state record and ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection.

Also a talented musician, Fraley has volunteered locally on behalf of a thrift store and youth sports programs. "I've never seen Veronica take a day off, and her dedication permeates throughout the whole team," said Wakefield coach Trent Wilson. "She is a very motivated and driven young lady who will leave an impact on the world."

Fraley has maintained a weighted 4.61 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Clemson University 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.

Fraley joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Tamara Clark (2016-17, High Point Central High School), Anna Cockrell (2015-16 & 2014-15, Providence Day School), Sydnei Murphy (2013-14, Apex High School), Wesley Frazier (2012-13, Ravenscroft School), Kendra Harrison (2010-11, Clayton High School), Sanura Eley O'Reilly (2009-10, Jack Britt), Aslynn Halvorson (2008-09, Butler), Jacinda Evans (2007-08, Southern), and Gabby Mayo (2006-07, Southeast Raleigh Magnet) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Fraley 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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