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**BERWICK AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Payden Montana of Berwick Area Senior High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Montana is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Berwick Area Senior 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 Montana as Pennsylvania'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, Montana 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-10 senior hurled the shot a state-record 51 feet at the Class AAA state meet this past season, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection. Montana also won the discus with a throw of 154-8. She captured a national title in the shot put (49-11.75) at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoor and took third in the discus (163-8).

The president of her senior class, Montana has volunteered locally feeding the needy and has participated in an elementary school literacy outreach initiative. "I don't hesitate to label Payden as the prototype of a Division 1 student-athlete," said Berwick coach Robert Calarco. "Her drive, dedication, willingness to sacrifice, commitment to refining her craft and excellence under pressure separate her from other athletes."

Montana has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Penn State 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.

Montana joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Madison Wilttrout (2016-17, Connellsville Area Senior High School), Chanel Brissett (2015-16, Cheltenham High School), Madison Wilttrout (2014-15, Connellsville Area Senior High School), Brianna Schwartz (2013-14, Shaler Area High School), Marshay Ryan (2012-13, Chambersburg Area Senior High School), Angel Piccirillo (2011-12, Homer-Center High School), Leah Nugent (2010-11, Abington Senior High School), Shelley Black (2009-10, Coughlin), Fawn Miller (2008-09, Lakeview), Chanelle Price (2007-08, Easton Area), and Ryann Kraus (2006-07, Methacton) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Montana 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.