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**CICERO-NORTH SYRACUSE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK BOYS 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 Jeremiah Willis of Cicero-North Syracuse High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New York Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Willis is the first Gatorade New York Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Cicero-North Syracuse 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 Willis as New York's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Willis 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, 165-pound junior soared 24 feet, three inches to win the long jump and launched himself 49-9.25 to capture the triple jump at the Division 1 state meet this past season. Willis's winning long jump ranked as the nation's No. 4 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection, while his triple jump effort ranked No. 11.

Willis has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Jeremiah is a tireless worker who puts in long hours working on the techniques and drills needed to perform in such a high manner," said Cicero-North Syracuse coach Greg Broton. "He's also a selfless individual who always pushes others and cheers them on to higher levels."

Willis has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He will begin his senior 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.

Willis joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Daniel Claxton (2016-17, Smithtown High School East), Rayvon Grey (2015-16, Mount Vernon High School), Rai Benjamin (2014-15, Mount Vernon High School), Benjamin Bonhurst (2013-14, Smithtown High School West), J.J. Stallworth (2012-13, Connetquot High School), Nick Ryan (2011-12, Fayetteville-Manlius High School), Chad Noelle (2010-11, Greene Central High School), Mike Quercia (2009-10, Marcellus Senior High School), Will Cole (2008-09, Hamburg High School), Kyle Merber (2007-08, Half Hollow Hills High School West), and Walter Henning (2006-07, St. Anthony's High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Willis 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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