

PICKERINGTON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OHIO BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 24, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Evan Matthews of Pickerington Central High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Matthews is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Pickerington 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 Matthews as Ohio'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, Matthews 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 6-foot-5, 180-pound senior won the 300-meter intermediate hurdles in 36.88 seconds at the Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Tigers to the state championship as a team. Matthews also ran legs on the first-place 4x200 and 4x400 relay foursomes. His season-best clocking of 36.12 in the 300 hurdles ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2019 at the time of his selection.

Matthews has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and youth basketball programs. "Evan is not only a great athlete, but he is also a role model for younger athletes," said Pickerington Central coach Jason Roach. "I can honestly say that I'll never coach another one like him. He's truly special."

Matthews has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at The Ohio 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Matthews joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Dustin Horter (2017-18, Lakota East High School), Max Frye (2016-17, New Albany High School), Andrew Jordan (2015-16, Watkins Memorial High School), Chad Zallow (2014-15, John F. Kennedy High School) and Steele Wasik (2013-14, St. Edward High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Matthews also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

###