

LOWER RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 **Tyler Graves of Lower Richland High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Graves is the second Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lower Richland 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 Graves as South Carolina'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, Graves 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, 160-pound junior won the 110-meter high hurdles and the 400-meter intermediate hurdles at the Class AAAA state meet this past season, leading the Diamond Hornets to a seventh-place finish as a team. Graves' personal-best clocking of 13.81 in the 100 hurdles in April ranked as the nation's No. 15 performance among prep competitors in 2019 at the time of his selection, while his personal-best 400 of 53.09 at state ranked No. 18.

A National Society of Black Engineers junior member as well as a participant in his school's Technology Student Association, Graves has volunteered locally repairing houses for the disadvantaged. He has also donated his time as a youth tutor and track coach. "Tyler is an exceptional talent in the hurdles," said Jackie Robinson, head coach of Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School. "He reached a level that very few individuals reach in the event."

Graves has maintained a 3.41 GPA 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. 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.

Graves joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Keyshawn King (2017-18, Liberty High School), DJ Ledell (2016-17, River Bluff High School), Darrell Singleton (2015-16, West Ashley High School), Tavien Feaster (2014-15, Spartanburg High School) and Jaylen Bacon (2013-14, Lower Richland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Graves 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.