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**LAKES COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Cameron Ruiz of Lakes Community High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ruiz is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lakes Community 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 Ruiz as Illinois' 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, Ruiz 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, 165-pound senior soared a meet-record 51 feet, one inch to win the triple jump at the Class 3A state meet this past season. Ruiz's winning jump ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection. He also finished second in the long jump with a leap of 23-7.5.

A devoted member of his church community, Ruiz has volunteered locally on behalf of a food pantry and youth football programs. "Cameron pushes himself to the max in everything that he does," said Lakes Community High School coach Jason Ellerman. "He's a great leader by example and is always willing to help younger athletes get the most out of their ability level."

Ruiz has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at Northwestern 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.

Ruiz joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Sean Torpy (2015-16, Carl Sandburg High School), Ja'Mari Ward (2014-15 & 2013-14, Cahokia High School), Kyle Landon (2012-13, Chester High School), Carl Heinz (2011-12, Oak Park River Forest High School), Zach Ziemek (2010-11, Lake Park High School), Logan Pflibsen (2009-10, Streator Township High School), Dan Block (2008-09, Lake Park High School), Mat Smoody (2007-08, Palatine High School), and Evan Jager (2006-07, Jacobs High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Cameron 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.

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