

## **SPARTANBURG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Riley Vaughn of Spartanburg High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track and Field Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Vaughn as South Carolina’s best high school girls track and field athlete and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Sanya Richards (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida), Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (2015-16 & 2016-17, Union Catholic Regional High School, New Jersey) and Jane Hedengren (2024-25, Timpview High School, Utah).

The 5-foot-10 junior throws specialist swept the shot put and discus throw at the Class 5A, Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Vikings to fifth place as a team. At the Upper State qualifying meet, Vaughn put the shot a personal-best 47 feet, 3.5 inches, which ranked No. 29 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring. She also took third in the shot put with a heave of 45-0.75 to earn All-American honors at Under Armour Nationals.

Vaughn has volunteered locally at nursing homes in addition to assisting with school-supply drives, food-distribution events and church outreach initiatives. She has also donated her time as a youth track and basketball coach. “Unbeaten in the discus throw on home state soil this year, Vaughn achieved success in both throws, but really sparkled in the shot put circle,” said Rich Gonzalez, PrepCalTrack editor. “Her season-best there was the state’s top mark in the event in seven years and moved her to No. 4 on South Carolina’s all-time list.”

Vaughn has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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