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**WILBUR CROSS HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Danae Rivers of Wilbur Cross High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Rivers is the third Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Wilbur Cross 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 Rivers as Connecticut's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Rivers joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The 5-foot-3 sophomore won the 800-meter run with a time of 2:14.40 and the 1,600 in 4:47.45 at the State Open championships this season, leading the Governors to third place as a team. Rivers also anchored the winning 4x400-meter relay squad that broke the tape in 3:58.37. At the Class LL divisional championships, she captured first in the 800 with a meet-record time of 2:10.98 as well as gold in the 1,600 (4:55.28). Her fastest 1,600 and 800 times, respectively, ranked as the nation's No. 20 and No. 66 performances among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of her selection.

Rivers has maintained a 4.36 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs as well as an accomplished flutist in the Nspyre Youth Orchestra, she has volunteered locally at a food bank and senior center, as part of a coat drive for the needy and on behalf of the New Haven Age Group Track Club.

"Her performance on the track goes without question," said Kevin Connell, head coach of rival Branford High. "She is the consummate competitor who gets the most of her abilities. As an opposing coach, you realize she is an incredible athlete who can dominate a meet, whether it's a simple dual meet or even the State Open championships. She has made an enormous impact on the program at Wilbur Cross and will make my coaching life difficult over the next few years."

Rivers will begin her junior 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Rivers joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Claire Howlett (2012-13, Westhill High School), Precious Holmes (2011-12 & 2010 - 11, Hillhouse High School), Lindsay Crevoiserat (2009-10, Glastonbury), Meg Ryan (2008-09, Fairfield Warde), Anna Shields (2007-08, Lewis Mills), and Shaniqua Burgess (2006-2007, Hillhouse) among the state's list of former award winners.

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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