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**CLASSICAL HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Maddy Berkson of Classical High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Berkson is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Classical 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 Berkson as Rhode Island'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, Berkson 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.).

A two-time returning Gatorade State Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-4 senior broke her own state record in the 1,500 meters at the state meet this spring and led the Purple to a second straight state title. Berkson's time of 4:26.88 ranked as the nation's No. 4 performance among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of her selection. Berkson also won the 800-meter run at the state meet in addition to running a leg of Classical's winning 4x400-meter relay team and placing fifth in the 3000-meter run. Berkson holds eight state records and is ranked in the top 50 nationally in the 800 (2:10.04), mile (4:52.08) and 3000 (9:44.72). She concluded her prep track career with 18 state titles.

Berkson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally for the Ronald McDonald's House Road Race and at youth track events.

"Maddy is a unique athlete with the foot speed of a 400 runner and the cardiovascular endurance of a 3000 runner," said Mike Green, head coach of Classical High. "Simply put, Maddy has the physical tools, but her success comes from her work ethic and desire to be the best runner she can be."

Berkson has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at Stanford 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. 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.

Three-time winner Berkson joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Aleide Fernandes (2010 - 11, Central Falls High School), Molly Reilly (2009-10, South Kingstown), Eryn Wheeler (2008-09, Coventry), and Victoria Flowers (2007-08 & 2006-2007 Classical) 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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