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**UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2014) — In its 29<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Amelia Paladino of University High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Paladino is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from University 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 Paladino as West Virginia'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, Paladino 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 2013-14 Gatorade State Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, the 5-foot senior won three individual state championships at the Class AAA state meet this spring and led the Hawks to a fifth-place finish as a team. Paladino set a state record in winning the 800-meter run in 2:08.49, which ranked as the No. 19 performance in the nation among prep competitors in 2014 at the time of her selection. She also won the 1600-meter run and the 3200-meter run at states. Paladino owns the state records in the 1600, 3200 and mile, and her top 3200 time of 10:00.42 ranked No. 3 nationally. Her season-best mile time of 4:45.34 ranked No. 6.

Paladino has maintained a weighted 4.27 GPA in the classroom. A representative on the University High student council, she has volunteered locally at the West Virginia Public Theater and as a peer mentor.

"Her speed is amazing," said Willie Ruffin, head coach of Capital High. "I have watched her for four years just use a sprinter-form running style. It's impressive to watch."

Paladino has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at West Virginia 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 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.

Paladino joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Maggie Drazba (2012-13 St. Marys High School), Emily Godwin (2011-12 & 2010 - 11, Buckhannon-Upshur High School), Bria Welker (2009-10, Frankfort), Taylor Brown (2008-09, Jefferson), Meghan Mock (2007-08, Berkeley Springs), and Kaylyn Christopher (2006-2007, Preston) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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