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**HOMEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 17, 2015) — In its 30<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 Kiara Williams of Homewood High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Williams is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Homewood 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 Williams as Alabama'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, Williams 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-4 senior won five individual state titles at the Class 6A state meet this spring, leading the Patriots to the championship as a team. Williams set a state record in the long jump with a leap of 20 feet, 5.25 inches, which ranked as the nation's No. 3 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection. She also won the 100-meter high hurdles in 14.29 seconds, the 300-meter intermediate hurdles in 43.94 seconds, the triple jump with a mark of 39-9.5 and the heptathlon, with a score of 4,745 points.

Williams has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has served as a mentor in her school system and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track programs.

"Kiara has been exceptional in every way," said Homewood head coach Tom Esslinger. "She has been dedicated, coachable and determined, and most importantly, she's been an exceptional leader."

Williams has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jayla Kirkland (2013-14, Woodlawn High School), Carmen Carlos (2012-13, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), Lacey Dent (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Neal Tisher (2008-09, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Madeline Morgan (2007-08, Mountain Brook), and Mary Carleton Johnson (2006-07, St. Paul's Episcopal School) 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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