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**WILBUR CROSS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Danae Rivers of Wilbur Cross High School as its 2014-15 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 junior won the 800-meter run with a meet-record time of 2:05.86 at the New England Interscholastic Track & Field Outdoor Championships this past season, recording the nation's No. 6 performance among U.S. prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Rivers broke the tape in the 800 in 2:14.94 and the 1,600-meter run in 4:48.33 at the State Open championships this season, leading the Governors to fourth place as a team. She also anchored the second-place 4x400-meter relay quartet that finished in 3:58.32. At the Class L divisional championships, Rivers took first in the 800 in a meet-record time of 2:08.66 and won the 1,600 in 4:59.58. She anchored the winning 4x400-meter relay (3:56.65) at the class meet.

Rivers has maintained a 4.42 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, she has volunteered locally at a food bank and senior center. She has also served as part of a youth fun run and community track meet as well as on behalf of the Elm City YMCA and New Haven Age Group Track Club.

"I have been coaching since 1986, and I have had the pleasure of witnessing and coaching some amazingly talented athletes," said Patrick Redding, head coach of rival Sacred Heart Academy. "She has been one of the best I've witnessed. She has been a dominant runner from the moment she hit high school. She has an effortless way of running, textbook form, and she is a tremendous competitor. She is a coach's dream. She can run anything from a 200 to a cross-country course. She's truly a once-in-a-lifetime athlete.

Rivers will begin her senior 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.

Two-time winner Rivers joins 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 (2006-07, 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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