

**Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)**

**UNION CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Sydney McLaughlin of Union Catholic High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. McLaughlin is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Union Catholic 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 McLaughlin as New Jersey'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, McLaughlin 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-8 sophomore won the 400-meter intermediate hurdles with a time of 57.82 seconds and ran the opening leg of the winning 4x400-meter relay that broke the tape in 3:44.20 at the Meet of Champions this past season. The Star-Ledger's returning Girls Outdoor Track & Field Athlete of the Year, McLaughlin swept the 200-meter dash in 24.08, the 400 in 52.59 and the 400-meter hurdles in 58.82 at the Non-Public A Championships, leading the Vikings to the group team title. McLaughlin's 400 finish at the group championships and 400 hurdles time at the Meet of Champions each ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection. Her 400 hurdles time of 55.63 seconds at the 2014 USA Track & Field Junior National Outdoor Track & Field Championships broke the national freshman record and currently ranks second in U.S. prep history.

McLaughlin has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth track official, she has volunteered for the American Red Cross and as part of Hurricane Sandy relief efforts on behalf of the Central Jersey Chapter of HOPE Worldwide.

"Sydney has proven that she is an incredible athlete," said Union Catholic head coach Mike McCabe. "What separates her from her peers is her humility, attention to detail and strong work ethic. With all of the accolades that Sydney has recently received, she continues to act like the same humble girl I met as a freshman."

McLaughlin 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.

McLaughlin joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Keturah Orji (2013-14, Mount Olive High School), Olivia Baker (2012-13, Columbia High School), Ajeé Wilson (2011-12 & 2009-10, Neptune High School), Myasia Jacobs (2010-11, Paramus Catholic High School), Jillian Smith (2008-09, Southern Regional), Melanie Thompson (2007-08, Voorhees), and Danielle Tauro (2006-07, Southern Regional) 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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