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**RUSH-HENRIETTA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 17, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sammy Watson of Rush-Henrietta Senior High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New York Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Watson is the first Gatorade New York Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Rush-Henrietta Senior 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 Watson as New York'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, Watson 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 dash in a state meet record time of 52.69 seconds this spring and captured the 1500-meter state title in 4:25.24. Watson also anchored the 4x400 relay to the Division 1 state title in 3:43.94 and won the New York Federation title in the 400 with a time of 53.89. Her season-best mark in the 400 ranked as the nation's No. 3 time among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection. During the 2015 indoor season, Watson won the 800-meter championship at the New Balance Nationals Indoor and anchored Rush-Henrietta's sprint medley relay quartet to a national record of 3:52.68.

Watson has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. A talented musician and a peer mentor in her school, Watson has volunteered locally on behalf youth track camps.

"What she has accomplished this year is nothing short of amazing," said Rush-Henrietta coach Mike DeMay. "She hasn't had a bad race all year ... and I don't know that anyone has ever doubled in the 400 and 1500 at the state meet before."

Watson 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.

Watson joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Zola Golden (2013-14, Arlington High School), Sabrina Southerland (2012-13, Benjamin N. Cardozo High School), Mary Cain (2011-12, Bronxville High School), Aisling Cuffe (2010-11, Cornwall Central High School), Melissa Kurzdorfer (2009-10, Lancaster), Shelby Greany (2008-09, Suffern), Charlene Lipsey (2007-08, Hempstead), and Dalilah Muhammad (2006-07, Cardozo) 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.