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**D.W. DANIEL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Laurie Barton of D.W. Daniel High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Barton is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from D.W. Daniel 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 Barton as South Carolina'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, Barton 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-7 junior won the 400-meter dash and the 800-meter run at the Class AAA state meet this past season, leading the Lions to an 11th-place finish as a team. Barton broke the tape in the 800 for a second straight year, clocking a 2:18.51. She captured her first 400 title in 55.59 seconds. Her season-best clocking of 2:08.93 in the 800 ranked as the nation's No. 31 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of her selection.

Barton has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Daniel High Beta Club, she has volunteered locally on multiple community-service initiatives as part of her church youth group.

"Laurie Barton runs under control with great confidence," said Rich Wideman, head coach of Darlington High. "She can run [just] fast enough to win or she can take control and dominate a race."

Barton 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.

Barton joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Raven Saunders (2013-14, Burke High School), Kaila Smith (2012-13, Beaufort High School), Jalacy Green (2011-12, Colleton County High School), LeAnna Morrison (2010-11, Berkeley High School), Briana Nelson (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, J.L. Mann Academy), and Jasmin Stowers (2006-07, Pendleton) 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.

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