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RIO RICO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 19, 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 Carlos Villarreal of Rio Rico High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Villarreal is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Rio Rico 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 Villarreal as Arizona's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Villarreal joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 5-foot-9, 135-pound senior won the 800-meter run with a time of 1:54.23 and 1,600 in a state-record 4:03.97 at the Division III state meet this season, leading the Hawks to second place as a team. The state's 2014-15 Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Villarreal also anchored the winning 4x800-meter relay quartet to an 8:03.05 clocking and the second-place 4x400-meter relay squad that crossed the line in 3:25.69. His 1,600 time at the state meet and his mile finish in 4:05.25 at the prestigious Prefontaine Classic both ranked amongst the nation's top 10 performances by prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Villarreal has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally at youth track meets on behalf of the Rich River Athletics Club.

"He's an amazing athlete," said Scott Howard, head coach of rival Florence High. "I was able to witness his state-record 4:03 mile at the Arizona state track meet. He's also a humble athlete and was well respected amongst his peers. Our athletes had nothing but praise for Carlos and how he competed and carried himself off the track."

Villarreal has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arizona 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.

Villarreal joins recent Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Robert Grant (2013-14, Brophy College Preparatory), Bernie Montoya (2012-13, Cibola High School), Devon Allen (2011-12, Brophy College Preparatory), Billy Orman (2010-11, Tuba City High School), Brian Shrader (2009-10, Sinagua SH), Bryce Lamb (2008-09 & 2006-07, Chandler), and Allante Battle (2007-08, Desert Vista) 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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