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**LEAVENWORTH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Willie Morrison of Leavenworth High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Morrison is the third Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Leavenworth 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 Morrison as Kansas'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, Morrison 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 6-foot-2, 245-pound senior won the shot put and the discus as the Class 5A state meet this spring, leading the Pioneers to a second-place finish as a team. Morrison hurled the shot put 69 feet, 4.5 inches to break a 35-year-old state record and launched the discus 185-5. His state-championship effort in the shot ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Morrison has maintained a 3.46 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics.

"Willie came in as a freshman throwing 35 feet, so he's come a long way," said Leavenworth coach Willis Willmeth. "He had it set in his mind to be the best this year and he had the work ethic to make it happen. His goal was to get to 70 feet, but that record is a pretty cool accomplishment."

Morrison has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Indiana University 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.

Morrison joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Kord Ferguson (2013-14 & 2012-13, Ottawa High School), Jonny Giess (2011-12, Blue Valley Northwest High School), Macauley Garton (2010-11, Mill Valley High School), Johannes Swanepoel (2009-10, Shawnee Mission South), Adonis Saunders (2008-09, Olathe North), John Talbert (2007-08, Kansas City East Christian Academy), and Ian Trimble (2006-07, Shawnee Mission South) 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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