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**BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 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 Maxwell Willis of Bowie High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Willis is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bowie 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 Willis as Maryland'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, Willis 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, 150-pound junior captured three individual championships at the Class 4A state meet this past season, leading the Bulldogs to the team title. A Washington Post First Team All-Met selection, Willis broke the tape in the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.69 seconds, the 200 in 21.27 seconds and the 400 in 48.18 seconds. He also anchored the second-place 4x200-meter relay quartet that crossed the line in 1:28.64. His 100 and 200 times at the state meet both ranked as the nation's No. 30 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Also a football standout, Willis has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth athletic instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of his church and the Special Olympics. Willis has also donated toys and clothing to disadvantaged children and provided meals to the homeless at Thanksgiving.

"He is a beast on the track and well deserving of this honor," said Noel Cyrus, head coach of rival Suitland High. "He represents himself, his family, his team and his school in a dignified manner. He gives his all every time he steps on to the track, and he is humble and respects his competition. No boy in the state of Maryland has had a year like he has had so far."

Willis will begin his 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.

Willis joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Robert Carter (2013-14, Long Reach High School), Julian Woods (2012-13, Century High School), Dondre Echols (2011-12, Potomac High School), Ronald Darby (2010-11, Potomac High School), Marquis Woodyard (2009-10 & 2008-09, Governor Thomas Johnson), Jon Hill (2007-08, Walkersville), and Matthew Centrowitz (2006-07, Broadneck) 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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