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**VALLEY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 23, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Elena Bruckner of Valley Christian High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Bruckner is the first Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Valley Christian 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 Bruckner as California'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, Bruckner 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-6 senior won the shot put with an throw of 49 feet, 9.75 inches at the state championship meet this past season. Bruckner also finished second in the discus, and won both the shot put and discus at the Arcadia Invitational and the Texas Relays. She set a state record of 54-7 in the shot put, which ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2016 at the time of her selection. Her season-best throw of 186-10 in the discus ranked No. 1 nationally this season, and ranks her fourth in U.S. high school history.

Bruckner has maintained a 4.13 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community and a talented singer, she organized a medal drive to collect sports awards from championship athletes and redistribute them to hospitalized children.

"Statistically, Elena is one of the best combo throwers in the history of prep track and field, but she's never been satisfied, always looking to get better," said Valley Christian coach Josh Small. "She's a gifted athlete, but also one who has matched that talent with an incredible work ethic."

Bruckner has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Bruckner joins recent Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jasmyne Graham (2014-15, Eleanor Roosevelt High School), Ariana Washington (2013-14, Long Beach Poly High School), Sasha Wallace (2012-13 & 2011-12, Castro Valley High School), Amy Weissenbach (2010-11, Harvard-Westlake School), Ashton Purvis (2009-10, Saint Elizabeth High School), Anna Jelmini (2008-09, Shafter High School), Christine Babcock (2007-08, Woodbridge High School), and Tori Anthony (2006-07, Castilleja School) 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.