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**NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Margie Cullen of Needham High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Cullen is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Needham 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 Cullen as Massachusetts'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, Cullen 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 senior won the 2-mile run at the state's Outdoor Track & Field Championships this past season, leading the Rockets to an 11th-place finish as a team. Cullen's winning time of 10:27.59 was 8.02 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher and ranked as the nation's No. 14 time in 2016 among prep competitors at the time of her selection. A five-time state champion, she also was ranked No. 35 in the mile (4:53.34) and No. 98 in the 800-meter run (2:11.36).

Cullen has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and on behalf of the Kiva Club, an online lending platform for entrepreneurs around the world.

"Margie Cullen is one of the greatest track and field athletes this state has ever seen," said Mike Miller, head coach of Weymouth High. "I also know her as a league rival, and her sportsmanship and competitive spirit are second to none."

Cullen has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at Georgetown University beginning 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.

Cullen joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brianna Duncan (2014-15, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School), Karina Shepard (2013-14 & 2012-13, Dracut High School), Carla Forbes (2011-12, Newton North High School), Nadia Eke (2010-11, Holy Name Central Catholic High School), Deanna Latham (2009-10, Triton Regional High School), Emily Jones (2008-09 & 2007-08, The Bromfield School), and Arantxa King (2006-07, Medford High 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.

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