

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**ONATE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 23, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jennifer Ramirez of Onate High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ramirez is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Onate 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 Ramirez as New Mexico'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, Ramirez 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 hurdler won a pair of individual state championships this spring and led the Knights to a seventh-place finish as a team at the Class 6A state meet. Ramirez took first in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.72 seconds and in the 300-meter hurdles, breaking the tape in 43.47. A First Team All-State selection and a five-time state champion in the hurdles, she captured dual victories at the Marilyn Sepulveda Invitational, winning the 100 hurdles in 15.20 and the 300 hurdles in 44.90. The 2016 season constituted the third consecutive year that Ramirez was unbeaten against New Mexico competitors in the 100 hurdles.

Ramirez has maintained a 3.72 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of a toy collection drive for families in need and a breakfast and lunch program for elementary school students. She has also donated her time as a youth track & field coach.

"Jennifer Ramirez has accomplished something special in the sport of track and field," said Onate High head coach David Nunez. "To go undefeated in the hurdles for three seasons in 100 hurdles and win five gold state medals between the hurdle events is extraordinary."

Ramirez has will attend Our Lady of the Lake University in Texas where she will compete in track & field.

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.

Ramirez joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), Lauren Martinez (2013-14, Eldorado High School), Jenna Thurman (2012-13, Del Norte High School), Gina Okoye (2011-12, Eldorado High School), Julia Foster (2010-11 & 2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Lesly Torres (2008-09, Los Lunas High School), Skye Barnett (2007-08, Cibola High School), and Alexandra Darling (2006-07, La Cueva 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###