

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**GRAND FORKS CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Karly Ackley of Grand Forks Central High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Ackley is the fifth Gatorade North Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Grand Forks Central 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 Ackley as North Dakota'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, Ackley 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-5 junior distance talent won a pair of individual state championships this spring, leading the Knights to a sixth-place finish as a team at the Class A state meet. Also the state's Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Ackley took first in the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:53.76 and shattered a 12-year-old state record in the 3200-meter run, breaking the tape in 10:32.86. She also earned dual victories at the Great Southwest Classic, winning the mile-run (5:10.14) and the 3200 (11:15.54).

Ackley has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered as part of the Wild Hog Half Marathon in Grand Forks.

"Karly Ackley is an exceptional track & field athlete," said Grand Forks Central High head coach Eric Polries. "She is also an academic leader in the classroom, always striving to do her best in anything she does."

Ackley will begin her 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.

Ackley joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ashley Rone (2014-15, Red River High School), Brittany Brown Otter (2013-14, Bismarck High School), Amanda Levin (2012-13, West Fargo High School), Morgan Milbrath (2011-12 & 2010-11, Minot High School), and Laura Roesler (2009-10, 2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Fargo South 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.

###