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**T.F. RIGGS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 Cortney Dowling of T.F. Riggs High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Dowling is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from T.F. Riggs 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 Dowling as South 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, Dowling 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 senior sprinter won a pair of individual state championships this spring, leading the Governors to a seventh-place finish as a team at the Class AA state meet. Dowling won the 100-meter dash with a time of 11.97 seconds and set a state meet record in the 200-meter dash, breaking the tape in 24.27. She also earned second-place in the 400-meter dash, crossing the line in 54.19. A three-time Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Dowling was the top South Dakota sprinter at the Howard Wood Dakota Relays, capturing silver in both the 100 (12.28) and the 200 (24.37).

Dowling has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished pianist, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a youth track & field coach.

"Cortney Dowling is an amazing athlete," said James Appl, head coach at Aberdeen Central High. "She is humble, a hard worker and great competitor. She is a wonderful young lady."

Dowling has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Augustana University 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.

Three-time winner Dowling joins Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Macy Heinz (2014-15, Ipswich High School), Kari Heck (2011-12 & 2010-11, Washington High School), Jasmyne King (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Rapid City Central), and Leslie Brost (2006-07, Watertown 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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