

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**NANSEMOND RIVER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Brandee' Johnson of Nansemond River High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Johnson is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Nansemond River 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 Johnson as Virginia'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, Johnson 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-4 senior captured three individual state championships at the Group 5A state meet this past season, leading the Warriors to a state championship as a team. Johnson set meet records in winning the 300-meter intermediate hurdles and the 200-meter dash while also winning the 100-meter hurdles and taking silver in the long jump. At the time of her selection, Johnson ranked among the nation's top five prep competitors in the 100 hurdles, 300 hurdles and 400 hurdles in 2016. She also ranked in the top 40 nationally in the 200- and 400-meter dash. She concluded her prep track career with 17 state titles and eight state records.

Johnson has maintained a 3.22 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's yearbook staff, she has volunteered locally as a youth mentor in addition to donating her time as a youth track coach and official.

"Brandee' Johnson is an exceptional athlete," said WC Winston, head coach of Mills Godwin High. "I have no doubt that she will have a great opportunity to represent the United States in the Olympics in the next eight years."

Johnson has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at the University of Florida 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.

Johnson joins recent Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Titiana Marsh (2014-15, Thomas Dale High School), Chantel Ray (2013-14, Hampton High School), Felecia Majors (2012-13, South County High School), Megan Moye (2011-12, Cosby High School), Desmonae Gray (2010-11, Western Branch High School), Kathleen Stevens (2009-10, Blacksburg High School), Marlana Wesh (2008-09, Landstown High School), Natalie Baird (2007-08, Park View High School), and Catherine White (2006-07, Northside 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.

###