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**BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 McKenna Smith of Bridgeport High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bridgeport 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 Smith as West 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, Smith 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-6 junior captured four individual titles at the Class AA state meet this past season, setting three state records in the process and leading the Indians to a state championship as a team. Smith won the 100-meter dash with a time of 11.89 seconds, the 200-meter dash in 24.37 and the 400-meter dash in 55.25. She also broke the tape in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles, setting a new state meet record of 44.03.

Smith has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. An active member of the Bridgeport High student council, she has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit breast cancer. She has also donated her time to a food bank and homeless shelter.

"McKenna Smith is that good," said Dan Dawson, head coach of Keyser High. "She shattered three state records this year. She was head and shoulders above the competition."

Smith 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Anacia Hines (2014-15, St. Albans High School), Amelia Paladino (2013-14, University High School), Maggie Drazba (2012-13, St. Marys High School), Emily Godwin (2011-12 & 2010-11, Buckhannon-Upshur High School), Bria Welker (2009-10, Frankfort High School), Taylor Brown (2008-09, Jefferson High School), Meghan Mock (2007-08, Berkeley Springs High School), and Kaylyn Christopher (2006-07, Preston 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).

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