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**HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 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 Connor Stevens of Hamilton High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Stevens is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Hamilton 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 Stevens as Arizona's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Stevens joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-1, 190-pound senior won the pole vault with a leap of 17 feet at the Division I state meet this past season, leading the Huskies to third place as a team. A two-time All-Arizona selection as named by The Arizona Republic, Stevens' pole vault at the state meet ranked as the nation's No. 8 clearance among U.S. prep competitors in 2016 at the time of his selection. He also won the pole vault at the 2014 and 2015 Division I state meets as a sophomore and junior.

Stevens has maintained a 4.07 weighted GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group.

"Connor is in a class all by himself," said Hamilton head coach Vaughn Powers. "After a freshman season of being a three-sport athlete, he decided to make pole vaulting his only endeavor. He joined a pole vault academy and improved his skill through hard work and perseverance. Connor has since led his teammates to work harder and smarter, and his leadership was key in the third-place finish to our 2016 season. Connor leaves a legacy of great vaulting, but more importantly he leaves his desire to help his team by any means necessary."

Stevens will attend the United States Air Force Academy this fall, where he will compete in track and 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.

Stevens joins recent Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Carlos Villarreal (2014-15, Rio Rico High School), Robert Grant (2013-14, Brophy College Preparatory), Bernie Montoya (2012-13, Cibola High School), Devon Allen (2011-12, Brophy College Preparatory), Billy Orman (2010-11, Tuba City High School), Brian Shrader (2009-10, Sinagua High School), Bryce Lamb (2008-09, Chandler High School), Allante Battle (2007-08, Desert Vista High School), and Bryce Lamb (2006-07, Chandler 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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