

**TEWKSBURY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 20, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Makayla Paige of Tewksbury Memorial High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Paige is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Tewksbury Memorial 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 Paige as Massachusetts' 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, Paige joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-1 sophomore earned All-American honors by placing fourth in the 800-meter run at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor this past season. Paige's time of 2:06.27 ranked No. 8 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection. The Massachusetts State Track Association Athlete of the Year for indoor track, she set a state record this winter with a time of 1:29.71 in the 600-meter run and also won the 800-meter run at the state meet.

Paige has volunteered locally as a youth running coach and has donated her time to a fundraising campaign to benefit She's The First, which helps young women from underprivileged communities further their education. "Makayla Paige is an exceptional athlete," said Katie Andrade, head coach of Central Catholic High. "She is strong, versatile and a fierce yet graceful competitor. She is a once-in-a-generation athlete."

Paige has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Paige joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Samantha Friborg (2017-18, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School), Clare Martin (2016-17, Newton South High School), Margie Cullen (2015-16, Needham High School), Brianna Duncan (2014-15, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School) and Karina Shepard (2013-14, Dracut High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Paige also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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