

**WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Paige Sommers of Westlake High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Sommers is the first Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Westlake 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 field, distinguishes Sommers as California'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, Sommers joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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-11 junior broke the state outdoor record in the pole vault, soaring 14 feet, six inches at the 2020 Thousand Oaks Lancer Invitational, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors during the abbreviated spring campaign, and represents the No. 4 mark in U.S. high school history. Sommers also won the event at June's Desert Dream-Last Hurrah Invitational. She took second in the pole vault at the California Winter Championships and finished second at the 2019 outdoor state meet.

President of the National Charity League's junior class, an organization through which she's undergone 135 hours of leadership training, Sommers has also volunteered locally on behalf of a thrift store and the Manna Conejo Valley Food Bank. "Paige is an immensely talented athlete who maintains a structured balance with her academics and other activities," said Westlake coach Chad Scott. "She competes in two very technical events, the pole vault and high jump. Being able to maintain focus during each approach and ensuring the steps and timing are correct takes a tremendous amount of skill."

Sommers has maintained a 4.22 GPA in the classroom. She 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Sommers joins recent Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jocelynn Budwig (2018-19, Fowler High School), Tierra Robinson-Jones (2017-18, Bishop O'Dowd High School), Shae Anderson (2016-17, Norco High School), Elena Bruckner (2015-16, Valley Christian High School), Jasmyne Graham (2014-15, Eleanor Roosevelt High School), and Ariana Washington (2013-14, Long Beach Poly High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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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