

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

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

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Caitlyn Little of Hoover High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Little is the second Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Hoover 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 Little as Alabama'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, Little 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-4 senior earned a silver medal and clocked a season-best time of 13.29 seconds in the 100-meter hurdles at April's Arcadia Invitational, which ranked as the nation's No. 3 time in the event this season at the time of her selection. Little also broke the tape in the 100 hurdles at the Class 7A state meet with a time of 13.52 and won the 100-meter dash state title in 12.08. She added a second-place finish in the 200 (24.21) to lead the Buccaneers to the state championship as a team. Little broke a 22-year-old meet record in the 100 hurdles at this spring's Mobile Challenge of Champions with a time of 13.47 and graduates with the 7A meet record in the 100 dash (11.97), set in 2016.

Little has participated in the Church of the Highlands bible study group and also participates in the parish's annual community service day. She has volunteered her time both at the Brighton Fire Department as an administrative assistant and as a youth volleyball coach at the YMCA. "One of the elite sprinter-hurdlers in the country, Little not only continued the tradition of great Hoover athletes in those events, but secured her legacy as one of the best competitors in state history," said Erik Boal, editor for Dyestat.com. "One of Little's most impressive characteristics remains her consistency, but she continued to raise her level in national competitions, both indoors and during the spring outdoor season."

Little has maintained a B average in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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 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.

Little joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brittley Humphrey (2015-16, Hoover High School), Kiara Williams (2014-15, Homewood High School), Jayla Kirkland (2013-14, Woodlawn High School), Carmen Carlos (2012-13, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), Lacey Dent (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Neal Tisher (2008-09, St. Paul's Episcopal School), Madeline Morgan (2007-08, Mountain Brook High School), and Mary Carleton Johnson (2006-07, St. Paul's Episcopal School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Caitlyn will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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).

###