

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**WARRENSBURG-LATHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kathleen Young of Warrensburg-Latham High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Young is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Warrensburg-Latham 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 Young as Illinois' 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, Young 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-10 senior won both the shot put and discus at the Class 1A state meet this past season, leading the Cardinals to a second-place finish as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Young hurled the shot put 48 feet, 11.5 inches, and launched the discus 150-0. Her season-best effort of 53-5 in the shot put was a state record and ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of her selection. Young also finished second in the shot put at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoor.

Young has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth track programs. "Kathleen never ceases to amaze you," said Warrensburg-Latham coach Tamra Davis. "She is one of the most dedicated and driven athletes I have ever known or coached. No one works harder than her. What really sets her apart is that, despite her success, she is still very humble."

Young has maintained a 4.93 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Two-time winner Young joins Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brittny Ellis (2014-15, Warren Township High School), Parker English (2013-14, Evanston Township High School), Emmonnie Henderson (2012-13, Edwardsville High School), Aaliyah Brown (2011-12, Lincoln-Way East High School), Jena Hemann (2010-11, Central Community High School), Kelsey Card (2009-10, Carlinville High School), Daniella Bunch (2008-09 & 2007-08, Mahomet-Seymour High School), and Egle Staisiunaite (2006-07, Downers Grove South High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kathleen 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.

###