

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

**SENECA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Carisma Holland of Seneca High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Holland is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Seneca 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 Holland as South Carolina'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, Holland 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-9 senior won the shot put and the discus at the Class AAA state meet for a third straight year this past season, leading the Bobcats to a second-place finish as a team. Holland finished eighth in the shot at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoor, and her personal-best toss of 49 feet, 2.75 inches at the Tri State Relays in March ranked as the nation's No. 9 performance among prep competitors this spring at the time of her selection.

An All-State choral student, Holland is a four-year member of her school's student government. She has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and with the Special Olympics. "Carisma Holland is a difference maker," said Robert Gray, head coach of Chapman High. "I have no doubt in my mind that she will be competing in the Olympics in the near future."

Holland has maintained a weighted 3.83 GPA in the classroom. She 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.

Holland joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Laurie Barton (2015-16 & 2014-15, D.W. Daniel High School), Raven Saunders (2013-14, Burke High School), Kaila Smith (2012-13, Beaufort High School), Jalacy Green (2011-12, Colleton County High School), LeAnna Morrison (2010-11, Berkeley High School), Briana Nelson (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, J.L. Mann Academy), and Jasmin Stowers (2006-07, Pendleton High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Carisma 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).

###