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**BRANDON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Krista Bickley of Brandon Valley High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Bickley is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Brandon Valley 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 Bickley as South Dakota'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, Bickley 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 sophomore won the 200-meter dash, 400-meter dash and ran the anchor leg on the winning 4x200-meter relay team at the Class AA state meet this past season, leading the Lynx to a second-place finish as a team. Bickley set the state record in the 400 as a freshman in 2016 with a clocking of 54.08 seconds and she was a member of the 4x400-meter relay team that set a state record at the Howard Wood Dakota Relays 2017. She was undefeated in the 200 and 400 this spring.

Bickley has volunteered as a youth track and basketball coach, and she has donated her time as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group. "Krista is that rare athlete that comes along once or twice in a coach's career," said Troy Sturgeon, head coach of Brandon Valley High. "She is the consummate team player and always puts the team and her teammates first."

Bickley has maintained a 4.0 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. 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.

Bickley joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Cortney Dowling (2015-16, 2013-14 & 2012-13, T.F. Riggs High School), Macy Heinz (2014-15, Ipswich High School), Kari Heck (2011-12 & 2010-11, Washington High School), Jasmyne King (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Rapid City Central High School), and Leslie Brost (2006-07, Watertown High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Krista 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.

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