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**BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 McKenna Smith of Bridgeport High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bridgeport 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 Smith as West Virginia'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, Smith 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 state's returning Gatorade Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-6 senior set four state records at the Group AA state meet this past season, leading the Indians to a second-place finish as a team. Smith won the 100-meter dash (11.85 seconds), the 200 (24.49), the 400- (54.61) and the 300-meter low hurdles (43.04) for a 40-point day. She set the 200 dash state record of 24.36 during her qualifying race. Smith's 400 clocking ranked as the nation's No. 56 performance among prep competitors this spring at the time of her selection, while she ranked No. 60 nationally in the 300 hurdles.

A member of the Bridgeport High student council, Smith has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit breast cancer research. She has also donated her time serving food at local missions for the needy. "McKenna has been a tremendous athlete for Bridgeport the last four years," said Emilee Stout, head coach of Bridgeport High. "She takes her role very seriously and sets goals throughout each year. She works hard to obtain those goals and never quits."

Smith has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at West Virginia University 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year McKenna Smith (2015-16, Bridgeport High School), Anacia Hines (2014-15, St. Albans High School), Amelia Paladino (2013-14, University High School), Maggie Drazba (2012-13, St. Marys High School), Emily Godwin (2011-12 & 2010-11, Buckhannon-Upshur High School), Bria Welker (2009-10, Frankfort High School), Taylor Brown (2008-09, Jefferson High School), Meghan Mock (2007-08, Berkeley Springs High School), and Kaylyn Christopher (2006-07, Preston High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, McKenna 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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