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**BULLIS SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Masai Russell of Bullis School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Russell is the first Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bullis 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 Russell as Maryland'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, Russell 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-3 senior won the 300-meter intermediate hurdles with a state-record time of 40.16 seconds at the Independent School League Championships this past season, leading the Bulldogs to the title as a team. Russell also won the 100-meter high hurdles in 13.84. Her winning time in the 300 hurdles ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection, and No. 4 in U.S. high school history. Russell capped her prep career by taking third in the 400-meter hurdles at the USATF Junior Outdoor Championships.

Russell has volunteered locally feeding the homeless and assisting at a retirement home. "Masai is very talented, but she doesn't rest on her talent alone to achieve her goals," said Bullis coach Joe Lee. "She approaches training the same as she does a national final. She takes every drill rep and every set seriously. She is teachable and she is tenacious."

Russell has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Russell joins recent Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Nyjari McNeil (2016-17, Franklin High School), Maria Coffin (2015-16, Annapolis High School), Jackie McNulty (2014-15, Oakdale High School), Javonne Antoine (2013-14, Elizabeth Seton High School), Ellie Gonzalez (2012-13, The Catholic High School of Baltimore), Mobolaji Adekun (2011-12, DuVal High School), Olivia Ekpone (2010-11 & 2009-10, Northwest High School), Lorraine Graham (2008-09, Charles Herbert Flowers), Olivia Ekpone (2007-08, Wootton High School), and Tasha Stanley (2006-07, Eleanor Roosevelt High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Russell 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.