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**LAKELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Grace Stark of Lakeland High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Stark is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lakeland 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 Stark as Michigan'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, Stark 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 junior won a national title in the 100-meter high hurdles at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor this month with a time of 13.24 seconds, and also took third in the 100-meter dash in 11.47. Stark broke the tape in the 100-meter dash at the Division 1 state meet in 11.74, and captured the 100 hurdles in a state-record time of 13.16, which ranked as the nation's No. 2 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection, and No. 8 in U.S. high school history.

Stark has participated in service-mission trips with her church to aid the underprivileged. "Grace is self-motivated to be the best sprinter she can be," said Lakeland coach John Kababik. "She not only wants to beat her competition, but she always wants to reach her own personal goals. Her attitude is that of a champion who has only scratched the surface of her abilities."

Stark has maintained a 3.65 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Stark joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Anne Forsyth (2016-17, Pioneer High School), Brianna Holloway (2015-16, Oak Park High School), Annie Fuller (2014-15, Manistee High School), Anna Jefferson (2013-14, Oak Park High School), Hannah Meier (2012-13 & 2011-12, Grosse Pointe South High School), Hannah Meier (2010-11, Grosse Pointe South High School), Megan Goethals (2009-10 & 2008-09, Rochester High School), Ariel Roberts (2007-08, Pioneer High School), and Mary Angell (2006-07, Byron Center High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Stark 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.