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**BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS 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 Justin Forde of Brien McMahon High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Forde is the second Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Brien McMahon 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 Forde as Connecticut's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Forde 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 6-foot-1, 186-pound junior soared 49 feet, 6.5 inches to win the triple jump at the State Open meet this past season, also capturing second place in the high jump. Forde won the long jump (22-2.5) and the triple jump (48-3.75) at the Class LL state meet, and again finished second in the high jump. He took fourth in the triple jump at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor and his season-best efforts of 7-0 in the high jump and 50-3.25 in the triple jump both ranked among the nation's top 10 prep performances in 2018 at the time of his selection.

A mentor for younger students, Forde has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball and track programs. "Justin has a very high sports IQ and understands his events on a technical level, not just as an athlete doing what his coaches tell him," said Brien McMahon coach Patrick Bradley. "He's self-motivated and he pushes himself to be the best."

Forde has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Forde joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Tyler Gleen (2016-17, Trumbull High School), Eric van der Els (2015-16, Wilton High School), Spencer Brown (2014-15, Wilton High School), Tyler Latham (2013-14, Fitch High School), Henry Wynne (2012-13, Staples High School), Jake Scinto (2011-12, Cheshire High School), John Wlasuk (2010-11, Newtown High School), Chris FitzSimons (2009-10, Hamden), Cas Loxsom (2008-09, Wilbur Cross), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury), and James Nixon (2006-07, Hyde Leadership School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Forde 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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