

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**SHAWNEE HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Michael Hoffer of Shawnee Heights High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Hoffer is the second Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Shawnee Heights 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 Hoffer as Kansas'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, Hoffer 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-10, 160-pound senior won three individual events and ran a leg on the victorious 4x400 relay squad at the Class 5A state meet this past season, leading the Thunderbirds to second place as a team. Hoffer soared 23 feet, 4.75 inches to win the long jump, launched himself 46-9.25 in the triple jump and cleared 6-10 in the high jump. His personal-best effort of 7-0.25 in the high jump ranked as the nation's No. 7 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection.

A devoted member of his church youth group, Hoffer has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, youth sports programs and B&C Equine Rescue. "Michael is a three-sport athlete who overachieves at everything he does," said Shawnee Heights coach Brad Nicks. "He's also the humblest athlete I've ever seen and a true leader, in our hallways and classrooms as well as on the playing field."

Hoffer has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Hoffer joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Kyler True (2016-17, Olpe High School), Noah Green (2015-16, Leavenworth High School), Willie Morrison (2014-15, Leavenworth High School), Kord Ferguson (2013-14 & 2012-13, Ottawa High School), Jonny Giess (2011-12, Blue Valley Northwest High School), Macauley Garton (2010-11, Mill Valley High School), Johannes Swanepoel (2009-10, Shawnee Mission South), Adonis Saunders (2008-09, Olathe North), John Talbert (2007-08, Kansas City East Christian Academy), and Eric Thomas (2006-07, Thomas More Prep) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hoffer 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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