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**CONCORD ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Sam Welsh of Concord Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Welsh is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Concord Academy.

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 Welsh as Massachusetts'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, Welsh 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-4, 240-pound senior set a state record in the discus at the New England Prep School Track Association Division III Championships this past season, leading the Chameleons to a seventh-place finish as a team. Welsh's state-record throw of 212 feet ranked No. 1 in the nation among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection. Earlier this month, he won the national championship in the discus at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor, and he also won the shot put at the NEPSTA meet with his best effort of 60-0 ranking No. 65 in the nation.

Welsh has volunteered with The Food Project, a farm that provides food for locales that don't have ready access to healthy food. He has also donated his time as an orientation leader at Concord Academy. "Sam is a phenomenal athlete," said Paul Swaim, head coach of the Pingree School. "I have been coaching track since 1991 and Sam is the best high school thrower I have ever seen. When he throws the discus, it looks as though it's been fired from a missile launcher."

Welsh has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. He will attend Harvard University, where he will compete in track and field, 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.

Welsh joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Erick Duffy (2016-17, North Andover High School), Thomas Ratcliffe (2015-16, Andover High School), Sean Caveney (2014-15, Andover High School), Garrett O'Toole (2013-14, Middlesex School), Alex Niemiec (2012-13, Chicopee Comprehensive High School), Josh Lampron (2011-12 & 2010-11, Mansfield High School), Sam Bombaugh (2009-10, Falmouth High School), Mark Vetere (2008-09, Andover High School), Omar Aden (2007-08, Charlestown High School), and Mark Amirault (2006-07, Xaverian Brothers High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Welsh 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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