

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**LEE'S SUMMIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 KC Lightfoot of Lee's Summit High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Lightfoot is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lee's Summit 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 Lightfoot as Missouri'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, Lightfoot 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-2, 153-pound senior won the pole vault with a meet-record clearance of 18 feet at the Class 5 state meet this past season. Lightfoot also set a new state pole vault record at 18-5, which ranked as the No. 2 performance in U.S. prep history at the time of his selection. He added a national pole vault championship at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoor, clearing 18-0.5.

Lightfoot has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track athletes and the Chain of Hope animal rescue organization. "KC Lightfoot is the most focused athlete I've ever coached," said Todd Cooper, Director of Just Vault. "This year he jumped 18 feet or higher seven weeks in a row, and he's the number two ranked high school pole vaulter in United States history. He's a dedicated athlete who hones his craft six days a week."

Lightfoot has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Baylor University 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.

Lightfoot joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Austin Hindman (2016-17, Lafayette High School), Chris Nilsen (2015-16, Blue Springs High School), Carlos Davis (2014-15, Blue Springs High School), C.J. Jones (2013-14, Cardinal Ritter College Prep.), Ezekiel Elliott (2012-13, John Burroughs School), Dapo Akinmoladun (2011-12, Grandview High School), Daniel Everett (2010-11, Westminster Christian Academy), Dorial Green (2009-10, Hillcrest High School), Nick Happe (2008-09, Francis Howell North High School), Maurice Mitchell (2007-08, Raytown South High School), and Andy Oaker (2006-07, Steelville High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lightfoot 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.

###