

**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)**

**LAKOTA EAST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 Dustin Horter of Lakota East High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Horter is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lakota East 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 Horter as Ohio'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, Horter 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, 145-pound senior won his second consecutive 1600-meter championship at the Division 1 state meet this past season, with a time of 4:06.96. The state's reigning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Horter also took third in the 3200. He broke a state record in the 1600 with his time of 4:03.40 at the Rod Russell Invitational, a clocking that ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection. Horter also won the mile at the Brooks PR Invitational in 4:04.68 and his season-best time in the 3200 (8:48.62) ranked No. 2 nationally.

A member of the Student Athletic Leadership Team at Lakota East, Horter has participated in multiple service-mission trips with his church. He has volunteered locally at a food pantry and has donated his time as a teacher's aide at Vacation Bible School. "One of the toughest things to do as a distance runner is to stay healthy and consistently improve over a long period of time," said Lakota East coach Adam Thomas. "It's even harder to do when you've already achieved elite status at a young age, as Dustin did his freshman year. To continue to get better takes a great deal of mental and physical strength, and he definitely possesses both of those attributes."

Horter has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Indiana 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.

Horter joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Max Frye (2016-17, New Albany High School), Andrew Jordan (2015-16, John F. Kennedy High School), Chad Zallow (2014-15, John F. Kennedy High School), Steele Wasik (2013-14, St. Edward High School), Desmond Palmer (2012-13, Pickerington High School North), Donovan Robertson (2011-12 & 2010-11, Berea High School), Justin Welch (2009-10, Eastwood High School), Danny Neff (2008-09, Butler High School), Cory Leslie (2007-08, Perkins High School), and Brandon Saine (2006-07, Piqua High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Horter 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).

###