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**EAST GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Jeffery Pedersen of East Greenwich High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Pedersen is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from East Greenwich 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 Pedersen as Rhode Island'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, Pedersen 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 state's reigning Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, the 6-foot-4, 165-pound senior broke the tape in the 1,500-meter run at the state meet this past season, leading the Avengers to a third-place finish as a team. Pedersen's winning time of 3:53.39 ranked No. 3 in the nation among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection. He also ranked No. 16 in the nation in the 3,000-meter run with a personal-best clocking of 8:33.90.

The founder and leader of East Greenwich's 3D Animation Club, Pedersen has volunteered locally cleaning and washing the town's fire trucks. He has also donated his time at Forgotten Ones, a non-profit thrift store. "Jeffery is obviously very talented," said Scott Grandfield, head coach of St. Raphael Academy. "Jeffery had some great races when it counted and that's a testament to all his hard work, courage and doing everything it takes to win."

Pedersen has maintained a weighted 4.09 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Rhode Island 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.

Pedersen joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year D.J. Principe (2016-17, La Salle Academy), Bobby Colantonio (2015-16, La Salle Academy), Jack Salisbury (2014-15, La Salle Academy), Adam Kelly (2013-14, Barrington High School), Charlie Ionata (2012-13, Barrington High School), Joe Velez (2011-12, Classical High School), Jarell Forbes (2010-11, Classical High School), Kadeem Kushimo (2009-10, La Salle Academy), Andrew Springer (2008-09 & 2007-08, Westerly High School), and Tom Webb (2006-07, Bishop Hendricken Catholic High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Pedersen 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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