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**BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 Josh Sobota of Bearden High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Sobota was the first Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bearden High School when he won the award last year.

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 Sobota as Tennessee'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, Sobota 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 returning Gatorade Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 6-foot-5, 235-pound senior set state records in the shot put and discus throw this past season. Sobota took second in the shot put at June's New Balance Nationals Outdoor with a state-record throw of 69 feet, 1.25 inches, which ranked No. 3 in the nation among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of his selection. Sobota broke the state standard in the discus at the Ironwood Throwers Classic in Idaho with a mark of 200-5—No. 3 in the nation this spring. He also won the discus and shot at the Class AAA, Large state meet for a second straight year.

An accomplished bass player, Sobota is a member of the Knoxville Youth Symphony Orchestra. The president of his school's Key Club, he has volunteered locally at the East Tennessee Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House. "Josh is one of those once-in-a-lifetime student-athletes that a coach may be so fortunate to have on her team," said Patty Thewes, head coach of Bearden High. "He is quite a talented athlete. It was truly a pleasure to be his coach."

Sobota has maintained a weighted 4.34 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Two-time winner Sobota joins Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year George Patrick (2015-16 & 2014-15, Brentwood Academy), Harrison Williams (2013-14, Memphis University School), Brock Baker (2012-13 & 2011-12, Oakland High School), Tyler Anderson (2010-11, Hillsboro High School), Kevin Lazas (2009-10, Brentwood), Jordan Chaney (2008-09, Maryville), Sean Keveren (2007-08, Brentwood), and Rob Sorrell (2006-07, Bolton) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sobota 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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