

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VERMONT GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 20, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Ella Whitman of Champlain Valley Union High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Vermont Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Whitman is the third Gatorade Vermont Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union 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 Whitman as Vermont's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Whitman 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 5-foot-6 senior won the 3,000-meter run and finished second in the 1,500-meter run at the Division I state meet this past season, leading the Redhawks to a second-place finish as a team. A three-time state champion in the 3,000, Whitman ran her career-best time of 10.16.48 at a meet in early May, a clocking which ranked No. 84 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection.

The chairperson of CVU's Athletic Leadership Council, Whitman has volunteered locally at the University of Vermont Medical Center's Cardiac Rehabilitation Center. She has also donated her time as a youth track coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Ella Whitman has been dominant for so long," said Dan Hagan, head coach of Burlington High. "She continues to improve in the 3,000 despite the fact that no one in Vermont can run with her. She spends most of the 7 and a half laps all by herself."

Whitman has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Boston College beginning 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Whitman joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Molly McCreedy (2017-18, U-32 High School), Sonia John (2016-17, Rice Memorial High School), Katherine Cowan (2015-16, St. Johnsbury Academy), Kayla Gilding (2014-15, South Burlington High School) and Autumn Eastman (2013-14, Champlain Valley Union High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Whitman also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.