

RIPLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **Tori Starcher of Ripley High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Starcher is the second Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Ripley 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 Starcher as West Virginia'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, Starcher 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 Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot junior set a meet record in the mile at the Penn Relays this past season. Starcher's time of 4:38.19 is a state record and ranked No. 1 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection, and No. 9 in girls prep history. Starcher set meet records in the 800-meter run, the 1,600-meter run and as the anchor of Ripley's winning 4x400 relay team at the Class AAA state meet, leading the Vikings to the state title as a team. Starcher's owns the state record in the outdoor 800, having clocked a 2:07.42 to earn All-American status with her sixth-place finish at the 2018 New Balance Nationals Outdoor. Also the state's 2017-18 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, she ranked in the Top 30 in the nation in the 800, 1,500, 1,600 and 3,200 at the time of her selection.

A member of the Ripley High student council, Starcher founded the Ripley Youth Running Club, which promotes running skills and physical fitness. She has also volunteered locally as part of multiple community-service projects through her church youth group. "Tori went undefeated against West Virginia competition and set herself apart from all others," said Chris Parsons, head coach of Cabell Midland High. "Any race she entered, other runners were racing for second."

Starcher has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 1 in her class. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Two-time winner Starcher joins Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year McKenna Smith (2016-17 & 2015-16, Bridgeport High School), Anacia Hines (2014-15, St. Albans High School) and Amelia Paladino (2013-14, University High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Starcher 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.