

STEVENS POINT AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Roisin Willis of Stevens Point Area Senior High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Willis is the second Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Stevens Point Area Senior 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 Willis as Wisconsin'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, Willis 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-10 freshman won the 800-meter run and ran the anchor leg for the winning 4x400-meter relay at the Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Panthers to a ninth-place finish as a team. Willis, who set a national freshman record in the 800 at the New Balance Nationals Indoor in March, also won the 800 at the Brooks PR Invitational with a state-record time of 2:04.86, which ranked No. 3 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection. She ranked in the Top 70 nationally in both the 400-meter dash and the 1,600-meter run.

Willis plays violin at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Aber Suzuki Center. She has volunteered locally at the Portage County Cultural Festival. "Roisin is a naturally gifted track athlete," said Greg Peterson, head coach of D.C. Everest High. "She has a rare combination of speed and endurance that I have not seen since the mid-1980s. Roisin could do well at any distance in Wisconsin track."

Willis has maintained a weighted 3.96 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Willis joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brooke Jaworski (2017-18, Wausau West High School), Josie Schaefer (2016-17, Baraboo High School), Mikaela Grant (2015-16, Jefferson High School), Cami Davre (2014-15, Whitefish Bay High School) and Kennedy Blahnik (2013-14, Algoma High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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