

**FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Tess Stapleton of Fairfield Ludlowe High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Stapleton is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Fairfield Ludlowe 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 field, distinguishes Stapleton as Connecticut'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, Stapleton joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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 junior won the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7.88 seconds as well as the long jump (with a leap of 19 feet, 6.5 inches) at the New England High School Indoor Championships this past winter. Stapleton's winning hurdles time ranked as the nation's No. 4 performance in 2020, while her long jump effort ranked No. 6. She also won both events at the Class LL indoor championships and the State Open championships. In 2019, Stapleton won both the long jump and the 100 hurdles outdoors at the State Open.

Stapleton is co-founder of the "Songs for Smiles" troupe, which performs musical shows for special needs groups in the area, and she has volunteered on behalf of her community's Challenger Basketball program. "Tess Stapleton is the ultimate competitor," said Fairfield Ludlowe assistant coach Justin Tomczyk. "She's not only dedicated, she also wants to understand every facet and component of her training. It's that focus that enables her to be a better athlete and teammate every day."

Stapleton has maintained a 4.19 GPA in the classroom. 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. 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.

Stapleton joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Sydney Masciarelli (2018-19, Marianapolis Preparatory School), Alexis Holmes (2017-18, Cheshire Academy), Brittany Jones (2016-17, Bloomfield High School), Jessica Drop (2015-16, Coginchaug Regional High School) and Danae Rivers (2014-15 & 2013-14, Wilbur Cross High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

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