

**CEDAR FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 Mackenzie Michael of Cedar Falls High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Iowa Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Michael is the first Gatorade Iowa Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Cedar Falls 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 Michael as Iowa'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, Michael 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-5 senior ran in three events during the 2020 indoor season and set school records in all three, the 400-meter dash, the 800-meter run and the 1500-meter run. Michael's top time in the 800 of 2:16.53 ranked as the nation's No. 83 mark among prep competitors during the indoor season, and her 4:51.21 time in the 1500 ranked No. 93. A five-time state champion, Michael earned All-American honors at the 2019 New Balance Nationals Outdoor with her eighth-place finish in the 800. She also won the 800 at the 2019 Drake Relays, the first Cedar Falls individual champion at that meet since 2008.

Michael has volunteered locally at the Cedar Bend Humane Society and as a mentor to children with intellectual or physical disabilities. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Mackenzie Michael is a competitor," said Chris Wood, head coach of Cedar Falls High. "She is one of those rare talents that has God-given ability, but has grown a passionate and fierce work ethic."

Michael has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Oklahoma State University.

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.

Michael joins recent Gatorade Iowa Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ashlyn Keeney (2018-19, Liberty High School), Sydney Milani (2017-18, Southeast Polk High School), Joy Ripslinger (2016-17, Assumption High School), Kiana Phelps (2015-16, Kingsley-Pierson High School), Stephanie Jenks (2014-15 & 2012-2013, Linn-Mar High School), and Jalynn Roberts-Lewis (2013-14, Roosevelt 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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