

**LEAVENWORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Dhakiya Blake of Leavenworth High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Kansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Blake is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Leavenworth 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 Blake as Kansas'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, Blake 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-7 sophomore took second in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.67 seconds at the Mizzou High School Indoor Series Championship this past winter, which ranked as the nation's No. 79 time among prep competitors in 2020. Blake also placed second in the 200. She was a double gold medalist at the outdoor Class 5A state championship meet in the spring of 2019, breaking the tape in the 400, helping the 4x400 quartet to a win and finishing second in the 200. Blake took seventh in the 200 at the Great Southwest Classic.

Blake has served as a mentor for younger students and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track programs. "Dhakiya thrives on competition," said Leavenworth coach Rob Marriott. "She has a great mix of talent, work ethic and toughness that you can always rely on."

Blake has maintained a weighted 3.43 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Blake joins recent Gatorade Kansas Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Kendra Wait (2018-19, Gardner Edgerton High School), Dana Baker (2017-18, Olathe North High School), Cailie Logue (2016-17, Girard High School), Cailie Logue (2015-16, Girard High School) and Keiryn Swenson (2014-15 & 2013-2014, Maize 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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