

**MOUNT DE SALES ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 Isabella Whittaker of Mount de Sales Academy as its 2019-20 Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Whittaker is the first Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Mount de Sales Academy.

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 Whittaker as Maryland'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, Whittaker 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 senior ranked among the nation's top eight in four different events this past winter, including her state-record clocking of 37.76 in the 300-meter dash, which ranked as the U.S. No. 4 in 2020 and No. 10 in prep history indoors. The 2020 Baltimore All-Metro Indoor Track Athlete of the Year, Whittaker also ranked No. 5 nationally in the 500 (1:12.57), No. 6 in the 200 (23.93) and No. 8 in the 400 (54.84). She won the 55-meter dash along with the 300 and 500 at the IAAM Championships, and broke the tape in the 200 and 400 at the Hispanic Games.

A peer tutor in her school, Whittaker has volunteered locally on behalf of Our Daily Bread soup kitchen. "Bella Whittaker is a one-of-a-kind-athlete," said Mount de Sales coach Steve Weber. "At the conclusion of the indoor season, she had emerged as one of the top female athletes in the nation. She was poised to contend for an individual title at the 2020 New Balance Nationals Indoor meet until the pandemic-related cancellation of the event."

Whittaker has maintained a 4.46 GPA in the classroom. She will attend the University of Pennsylvania, where she will compete in track and field.

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.

Whittaker joins recent Gatorade Maryland Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Taylor Wright (2018-19, Northwest High School), Masai Russell (2017-18, Bullis School), Nyjari McNeil (2016-17, Franklin High School), Maria Coffin (2015-16, Annapolis High School), Jackie McNulty (2014-15, Oakdale High School), and Javonne Antoine (2013-14, Elizabeth Seton 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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