

**HERITAGE HALL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Daphne Matthews of Heritage Hall as its 2019-20 Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Matthews is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Heritage Hall.

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 Matthews as Oklahoma'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, Matthews 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-9 junior took second in the 800-meter run at the Carl Lewis Invitational with a time of 2:15.51 this past winter, which ranked as the nation's No. 55 prep indoor performance in 2020. Matthews is a four-time state champion in outdoor track and field, having won the 400 and the 800 at the Class 4A state meet as both a freshman and sophomore, in addition to taking silver in the 1600 each year. She also won the 800 at the National Junior Olympic Championships in 2019 for the 15-16 age group.

A devoted member of her church community, Matthews has volunteered locally on behalf of food banks and the Adopt-a-Grandparent program. "Daphne has the unique ability to excel at sprint distance, middle distance and distance," said Heritage Hall coach Dylan Sullivan. "The dedication she devotes to her craft is staggering, and it's not lost on her teammates, as they constantly strive to match her efforts."

Matthews has maintained a 3.92 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.

Matthews joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Madison Collier (2018-19, Hennessey High School), Ally Ryan (2017-18 & 2016-17, Jenks High School), Carsyn Spurgeon (2015-16 & 2014-15, Vinita High School), and Baylor Reese (2013-14, Fairview 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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