

**MASSAPONAX HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE VIRGINIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Aaliyah Pyatt of Massaponax High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Pyatt is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Massaponax 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 Pyatt as Virginia'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, Pyatt 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 junior clocked Top-20 national times among prep competitors in the 55-meter dash, the 200, the 300 and the 500-meter run during the 2020 indoor season. A two-time New Balance All-American, Pyatt captured two national championships at the 2019 USATF National Junior Olympics in the 15-16-year-old division, winning the 400-meter dash in 53.60 seconds and running the anchor leg on the first-place 4x400-meter relay quartet. She also broke the tape in the 100 at the 2019 Class 5A Outdoor state meet.

A member of the Massaponax Black Student Union, Pyatt has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and she has donated her time at nursing homes. "Aaliyah Pyatt is a very talented athlete," said Van Green, head coach of Colonial Forge High School. "She has very good range and seems to always perform at a high level. Her consistency and drive to be great are the two things that stand out to me the most."

Pyatt has maintained a weighted 3.2 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school in the 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.

Pyatt joins recent Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Britton Wilson (2018-19, Mills E. Godwin High School), Titiana Marsh (2017-18 & 2014-15, Thomas Dale High School), Rachel McArthur (2016-17, Patriot High School), Brandee' Johnson (2015-16, Nansemond River High School), and Chantel Ray (2013-14, Hampton 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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