

**RIPLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WEST 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 Tori Starcher of Ripley High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Starcher is the second Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Ripley 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 Starcher as West 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, Starcher 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 state's two-time returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-7 senior entered 12 events at the Class AAA state meet during her prep track career and took the gold medal in all 12. Also the 2017-18 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Starcher holds the state record in the 800-meter run, the 1,500, the 1,600, the mile, the 2-mile and shares in the 4x400-meter relay record. Her clocking of 4:38.19 in the outdoor mile at the 2019 Penn Relays ranked as the No. 9 time in prep history in the event.

A member of the Ripley High School student council, Starcher established the Ripley Youth Running Club, which promotes running skills and physical fitness. She has also volunteered locally as part of multiple community service projects through her church youth group. "Tori is an amazing individual, all-around—not just on the track," said Krystle Cunningham, head coach of Ripley High School. "She is one of the hardest workers I know."

Starcher has maintained a weighted 4.35 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Stanford 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.

Three-time winner Starcher joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year McKenna Smith (2016-17 & 2015-16, Bridgeport High School), Anacia Hines (2014-15, St. Albans High School), and Amelia Paladino (2013-14, University 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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