

**LOWER RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Tyler Graves of Lower Richland High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Graves is the second Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lower Richland 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 Graves as South Carolina's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in July, Graves 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 returning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 5-foot-10, 160-pound senior was named a New Balance Nationals Indoor All-American in the 60-meter high hurdles. Graves' best 60 hurdles time of 7.77 seconds ranked as the nation's No. 2 mark among prep indoor competitors in 2020. In this spring's abbreviated outdoor season, Graves ranked among the Top 10 nationally in both the 110-meter high hurdles and the 400-meter intermediate hurdles. He also won both of those races at the 2019 Class 4A outdoor state meet with clockings that rank among the top five in state history.

A member of Lower Richland's National Society of Black Engineers Jr. as well as the Technology Student Association, Graves has volunteered locally repairing houses for the economically disadvantaged. He has also donated his time as a youth tutor and track coach. "Tyler Graves is an awesome student-athlete," said Damien Jackson, head coach of Dreher High School. "We had to share practice areas with Lower Richland for a few years, and I was able to see his work ethic. I can see why he is as good as he is."

Graves has maintained a weighted 3.55 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Coastal Carolina 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.

Two-time winner Graves joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Keyshawn King (2017-18, Liberty High School), DJ Ledell (2016-17, River Bluff High School), Darrell Singleton (2015-16, West Ashley High School), Tavien Feaster (2014-15, Spartanburg High School), and Jaylen Bacon (2013-14, Lower Richland 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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