

**WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (July 2, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Naomi Bailey of West Valley High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Bailey is the third Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from West Valley 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 Bailey as Alaska's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Bailey 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 won three individual events at the Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Wolfpack to the state title as a team. The state's reigning Gatorade Player of the Year in girls cross country, Bailey won the 800-meter run with a time of 2:16.92, broke the tape in the 1600 in 5:00.28 and took the 3200 in 10:46.54. She was named the Outstanding Female Athlete at the state championship meet.

A youth leader at her church, Bailey has served as a mentor for elementary school children. "Naomi has dramatically improved every year since entering high school, to become one of the strongest high school runners ever in Alaska," said West Valley distance coach Dan Callahan. "She has developed into a very knowledgeable racer, able to train independently and compete at the highest level."

Bailey has maintained a 4.09 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Bailey joins recent Gatorade Alaska Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Hailey Williams (2019-20 & 2018-19, Delta Junction High School), Emma Nelson (2017-18, Chugiak High School), and Izabelle Ith (2016-17, Petersburg High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Bailey has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Bailey is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###