

**CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 **Riley Stewart of Cherry Creek High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Colorado Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Stewart is the second Gatorade Colorado Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Cherry Creek 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 Stewart as Colorado'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, Stewart 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-11 junior won three individual events at the Class 5A state meet this past season. The state's reigning Gatorade Player of the Year in girls cross country, Stewart won the 800-meter run in 2:09.60, broke the tape in the 1600 in 4:45.96 and took the 3200 in 10:31.45. She also anchored the victorious 4x800 relay quartet. Stewart's season-best time of 4:44.13 in the 1600 broke the Colorado girls state record.

A member of her school's student-athlete leadership council, Stewart has volunteered locally on behalf of park clean-up initiatives. "This season, Riley was undefeated in the state of Colorado and finished in the top five of each national-level competition she entered," said Ethan Dusto, distance coach at Cherry Creek High. "I've coached athletes for the past 17 years of my life, and I can say that I have had very few as talented as Riley, and none who have had the combination of talent, hard work, humility and teamwork that she exhibits."

Stewart has maintained a 3.97 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 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.

Stewart joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Taylor James (2019-20, Niwot High School), Anna Hall (2018-19 & 2017-18, Valor Christian High School), and Arria Minor (2016-17, Denver East High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Stewart has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Stewart 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.

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