

**OSBOURN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Lena Gooden of Osbourn Park High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Gooden is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Osbourn Park 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 Gooden as Virginia'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, Gooden 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 sophomore won the long jump at the Class 6 state meet this past season, leading the Yellow Jackets to a fifth-place finish as a team. Gooden's leap of 20 feet, 3.75 inches set a state-meet record and at the time of her selection, it ranked No. 8 nationally among 2021 prep competitors in her event. Gooden won the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter dashes as well as the long jump at the Region 6B Championships, setting meet records in each discipline. She also took second in the 400 and fourth in the 100 at the state meet.

A member of the National Art Society of American, Gooden is an active participant with the Osbourn Park High Black Student Union as well as the school's Counseling Advisory Council. She has donated her time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Our girls look forward to competing against Lena because she is an elite athlete who sets a high standard," said Calinda Hawkins, head coach of Patriot High. "Her great work ethic shows on the track during competition."

Gooden has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 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.

Gooden joins recent Gatorade Virginia Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Aaliyah Pyatt (2019-20, Massaponax High School), Britton Wilson (2018-19, Mills E. Godwin High School), Titiana Marsh (2017-18, Thomas Dale High School), and Rachel McArthur (2016-17, Patriot High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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