

**LAKE HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 30, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Olivia Pielemeier** of **Lake Hamilton High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Pielemeier is the second Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Lake Hamilton 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 Pielemeier as Arkansas' 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, Pielemeier 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 (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The state's 2021-22 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7 junior swept the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter events at the Class 5A state meet this past season, leading the Wolves to a second-place finish as a team. Pielemeier set a state meet record with her winning time of 11:15.86 in the 3,200 and she helped set another meet record as the anchor of Lake Hamilton's victorious 4x800-meter relay team. Her third-place finish of 4:53.88 in the mile run at the RunningLane Track Championships ranked No. 89 nationally among prep competitors in 2022 at the time of her selection.

Pielemeier has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit the American Heart Association, and she has donated her time at a homeless shelter in Hot Springs. "Olivia is definitely the one everybody is chasing in the 5A classification," said John Steward, head coach of Vilonia High. "Athletes like that don't come around very often."

Pielemeier has maintained a 4.0 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Pielemeier joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Sydney Billington (2020-21, Bentonville High School), Cassidy Mooneyhan (2019-20, Pea Ridge High School), Breyia Clark (2018-19, El Dorado High School), and Tiana Wilson (2017-18, Hamburg High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Pielemeier has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Pielemeier is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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