

**RENAISSANCE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 **Kaila Jackson** of **Renaissance High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Jackson is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Renaissance 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 Jackson as Michigan'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, Jackson 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 5-foot-3 senior won two individual events and ran on two winning relays at the Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Phoenix to the state championship as a team. Jackson broke the tape in the 100-meter dash in 11.64 seconds and took the 200 in 23.51, while running the lead leg on the victorious 4x200 relay and the second leg on the 4x100 relay. The Detroit Athletic Club's Michigan Female Athlete of the Year, she took fourth in both the 100 and the 200 at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor, earning All-American status in each event.

Jackson has served as tutor for elementary and middle school students and has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank, toy drives, a vacation bible school and charity road races. "Kaila is the type of athlete that comes along once every 25 years or so," said Renaissance coach Calvin Johnson. "She's extremely talented, works hard and is a leader. She's fought medical issues with diabetes her entire career and never allowed it to hold her back."

Jackson has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Georgia 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.

Jackson joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Audrey DaDamio (2020-21, Seaholm High School), Aasia Laurencin (2019-20, Oak Park High School), Ericka VanderLende (2018-19, Rockford High School), and Grace Stark (2017-18, Lakeland 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, Jackson 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. Jackson 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.