

**LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 **Dajaz DeFrاند** of **Lincoln High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. DeFrاند is the first Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln 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 DeFrاند as Nebraska'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, DeFrاند 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-5 senior set state records in winning the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes at the Class A state meet this past season, leading the Links to a seventh-place finish as a team. DeFrاند's winning 200 time of 23.74 seconds ranked No. 31 nationally among prep girls competitors in 2022 at the time of her selection, while her 11.64 clocking in the 100 ranked No. 36 nationally. She also ran the anchor leg on Lincoln's victorious 4x100-meter relay team.

DeFrاند has volunteered locally as an academic tutor at the Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands, and she has donated her time as a youth mentor at the Malone Community Center in Lincoln. "Dajaz is a very special athlete that only comes around once in a while," said Kevin Schrad, head coach of Lincoln Southwest High School. "This spring Dajaz was fun to watch because you knew she was always running for a state record."

DeFrاند has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Florida State University 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.

DeFrاند joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Kailynn Gubbels (2020-21, Arlington High School), and Kalynn Meyer (2019-20, 2018-19, & 2017-18, Superior 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, DeFrاند 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. DeFrاند 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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