

**LAKELAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW JERSEY GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 30, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Angelina Perez** of **Lakeland Regional High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Perez is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Lakeland Regional 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 Perez as New Jersey'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, Perez 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 set a state record of 9:53.29 in the 3200-meter run at the Group 2 state meet this past season, which ranked as the nation's No. 3 performance among prep competitors in 2022. The state's reigning Gatorade Player of the Year in girls cross country, Perez also won the Group 2 1600-meter run with a time of 4:48.68. She claimed a national title in the 2-mile run with a clocking of 10:03.18 at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor in Pennsylvania, then returned the next day to New Jersey and won the 3200 at the Meet of Champions.

Perez has raised funds on behalf of both breast cancer research and mental health awareness, and has volunteered locally for her public library as well as trail clean-up initiatives and charity road races. "Angelina had an unbelievable finish to an already illustrious career," said Lakeland Regional High School coach Damiano Conforti. "I feel she's meant more to the team, school and community than any other athlete, ever. She's a remarkable young lady who will be remembered for what she did for her teammates while also capturing national records and championships."

Perez has maintained a weighted 4.29 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Florida 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.

Perez joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Lilly Shapiro (2020-21, Colts Neck High School), and Victoria Vanriale (2019-20, 2018-19, & 2017-18, Governor Livingston 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, Perez 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. Perez 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).