

**FLOWER MOUND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Natalie Cook** of **Flower Mound High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Texas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Cook is the first Gatorade Texas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Flower Mound 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 Cook as Texas' 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, Cook 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 broke her own state record in the 3200-meter run this past season, clocking a time of 9:48.25 at the Class 6A state meet, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep girls competitors in 2022, which also ranked No. 2 in U.S. girls prep history at the time of her selection. The 2021-22 Gatorade National Player of the Year in girls cross country, Cook also won the 1600-meter state title in 4:40.29. She set a national record of 15:25.93 in the outdoor 5000 at the Stanford Invitational, and her season-best effort of 4:36.96 in the 1600 ranked No. 3 nationally among prep girls in 2022.

Cook has volunteered extensively on behalf of local middle school cross country programs in addition to coaching and instructing youth track athletes every summer. "Natalie Cook is an exceptional athlete and competitor who developed into as good of a runner as anyone I've ever seen," said William Grundy, Texas MileSplit Editor. "Every race was essentially her competing against the clock and against the record books. She was a good teammate, competed with character, and won with humility."

Cook has maintained a weighted 3.63 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Oklahoma 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.

Cook joins recent Gatorade Texas Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Jasmine Montgomery (2020-21, Reagan High School), Brynn Brown (2019-20, Guyer High School), and Jasmine Moore (2018-19 & 2017-18, Lake Ridge 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, Cook 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. Cook 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).

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