

**MORGANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **Irene Riggs** of **Morgantown High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Riggs is the first Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Morgantown 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 Riggs as West Virginia'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, Riggs 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 returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Player of the Year and a two-time Gatorade Girls Cross Country Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7 junior set a state record in the 2-mile run at the Brooks PR Invitational this past season. At the time of her selection, Riggs' clocking of 9:50.72 ranked No. 2 nationally among girls prep competitors in 2022 and was also No. 2 in history among high school girls. Riggs swept the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter runs at the Class AAA state meet, leading the Mohigans to a first place finish as a team. Her winning time of 10:14.16 in the 3,200 shattered the state meet record by more than 10 seconds. Her season-best 3,200 time of 9:54.69 at the Mountaineer Showcase ranked No. 4 in the country.

The vice president of her class at Morgantown High, Riggs has volunteered locally on behalf of fundraising campaigns to benefit the WVU Medicine Children's Hospital, and she has donated her time as a youth swimming coach. "Irene has continued her dominance in West Virginia girls distance running that she established [last year]," said Ed Frohnafel, an assistant coach of University High. "She ran uncontested against the best of the West Virginia girls in all of the events in which I saw her run."

Riggs 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.

Two-time winner Riggs joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Tori Starcher (2019-20, 2018-19, & 2017-18, Ripley 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, Riggs 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. Riggs 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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