

**QUEEN CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 28, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Catherine Littlewood** of **Queen Creek High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Littlewood is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Queen Creek 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 Littlewood as Arizona'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, Littlewood joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jasmine Moore (2018-19, Lake Ridge High School, Texas), Sydney McLaughlin (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Union Catholic High School, N.J.), and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa).

The 5-foot-7 senior returned from foot surgery in March to win the long jump at the inaugural Open state final, soaring a state-record 20 feet, 7 inches. That winning leap ranked No. 6 nationally among prep competitors this spring. Littlewood also won the state heptathlon title with 5,419 points, which ranked No. 2 nationally this season as well as No. 2 in state history. She earned All-American honors with third-place finishes in the long jump and heptathlon at Nike Outdoor Nationals.

The secretary of the Queen Creek High School National Honor Society, Littlewood has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed my Starving Children and as a peer tutor. She has also donated her time to students with special needs, including helping to plan a special needs prom. "Nine weeks after surgery for a Jones fracture in (the fifth metatarsal of) her foot, Catherine Littlewood completed an emotional and memorable comeback by winning the inaugural Open state title in the long jump with the No. 1 girls leap in Arizona history," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "She followed that with a 450-point improvement in her previous best heptathlon to move up to No. 2 in state history."

Littlewood has maintained a 4.46 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on scholarship at Stanford 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.

Littlewood joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Joy Moorer (2021-22, North Canyon High School), Makayla Long (2020-21, Perry High School), Jadyn Mays (2019-20, North Canyon High School), and Dominique Mustin (2018-19, North Canyon High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.