

**DELTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE INDIANA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 28, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Nicki Southerland** of **Delta High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Indiana Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Southerland is the first Gatorade Indiana Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Delta 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 Southerland as Indiana'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, Southerland 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 junior won the state title in the 1600-meter run and took second in the 800 this past season, clocking a personal-best time in both events, with her 1600 (4:43.73) ranking No. 14 among girls prep competitors in 2023 and her 2:05.06 in the 800 ranking No. 8. Southerland won the mile and finished second in the 800 at the national RunningLane Championships, capturing All-America honors in both events. At New Balance Nationals, she took fourth in the 800 and fifth in the mile, again earning dual All-America honors and clocking a personal-best 4:41.07 in the latter, which ranks 10th in the country this spring. She can also count herself among the top 30 in a fourth outdoor event in 2023 thanks to her personal-best 10:14.61 in the 3200 at the Carmel Distance Showcase, which ranks No. 28.

A member of the National Honor Society as well as her school's student council and swim team, Southerland has served as a freshman class mentor and as a peer tutor. She has volunteered locally as a Secret Families Shopper on behalf of a program that purchases Christmas gifts and supplies for low-income families, and she's donated her time as a holiday bell-ringer for the Salvation Army. Southerland has also made Christmas baskets for a nursing home and baked pumpkin pies for a mission in her community. "Nicki Southerland demonstrated her versatility by ranking in the top 30 nationally in four distance events, highlighted by a state title in the 1600 and a victory in the mile at RunningLane," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "Southerland took on an ambitious postseason schedule, earning All-America honors a combined four times outdoors at New Balance Nationals and RunningLane."

Southerland has maintained a 4.31 weighted 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.

Southerland joins recent Gatorade Indiana Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Addy Wiley (2021-22 & 2020-21, Huntington North High School) and Ramiah Elliott (2019-20 & 2018-19, North Central 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](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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