

**MORGANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **Irene Riggs** of **Morgantown High School** is the **2022-23 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 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 state's returning two-time Gatorade Girls Track & Field Player of the Year, the 5-foot-8 senior swept the 800-, 1600- and 3200-meter events at the Class AAA state meet this past season, leading the Mohigans to a share of the team title. Riggs, who won Gatorade National Cross Country Player of the Year honors last fall, also broke the tape in the 3200 at the Arcadia Invitational with a state-record time of 9:52.66, which ranked No. 3 nationally among prep competitors in 2023 and No. 11 in girls prep history. Also a three-time Gatorade West Virginia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year and the recipient of the 2023 Hardman Award as the state's top amateur athlete, she set a state record in the indoor 3200 in February, and her clocking of 9:45.97 ranks No. 2 in girls prep history indoors.

The student body vice president at Morgantown High, Riggs has volunteered locally on behalf of fundraising campaigns to benefit the WVU Medicine Children's Hospital. She has also donated her time as a youth swimming coach. "Irene Riggs celebrated the final chapter of the greatest career of any track or cross country athlete in West Virginia prep history with a historic performance in the 3200 this spring," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "Riggs rose to the occasion again in her final state meet this spring, winning three individual championships to help Morgantown capture a share of the Class AAA team title."

Riggs has maintained a 4.27 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.

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