

NORMAL COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 25, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ali Ince** of **Normal Community High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Ince is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Normal Community High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Ince as Illinois' best high school girls track & field athlete. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Sanya Richards-Ross (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Fla), Sydney McLaughlin (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Union Catholic High School, N.J.) and Angelina Napoleon (2022-23, Allegany-Limestone Central School, N.Y.).

The state's 2021-22 Gatorade Track and Field Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior distance talent won the Class 3A state title in the 800- and the 1600-meter run this past season and that was only the beginning of her postseason success. Ince took third in the 800 at New Balance Outdoor Nationals, clocking a time of 2:05.10 to earn All-American Honors. She matched that bronze-medal performance with a state record in the mile at the HOKA Festival of Miles, crossing the line in 4:35.96. Her 800 and mile times ranked as the nation's No. 6 and No. 4 performances by a prep girl this spring. Already the state record-holder in the 800, she also took second in the event at the national Brooks PR Invitational and broke the tape at the Arcadia Invitational. Her 1600 title at the state meet came in a personal-best 4:44.86.

Ince has volunteered locally with Midwest Food Bank, packing boxes and distributing food to those in need. She has donated her time as a monthly usher at St. John's Lutheran Church, where she also assists with organizing youth activities. "Ali Ince's aggressive racing style served her well in compiling one of the most prolific middle-distance careers in Illinois history," said Rich Gonzalez, editor for PrepCalTrack.com. "She swept the 800- and 1600-meter crowns at the state meet, marking the fourth consecutive year she earned two individual event titles at the state championships. She finished her prep career with four gold medals in the 800, three in the 1600 and one in the 400 while also setting the state records at both 800 meters and the mile."

Ince has maintained a weighted 4.22 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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 Ince joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Tatum David (2022-23, Richland County High School), (2020-21, East Alton-Wood River High School) and Katelynn Hart (2019-20, Glenbard West High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 organizations.

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 X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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