

SOLON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OHIO GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 20, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Olivia Howell of Solon High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Ohio Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Howell is the first Gatorade Ohio Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Solon 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 track, distinguishes Howell as Ohio's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Howell joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, 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 (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-5 senior won the 800-meter run with a time of 2:08.60 and the 1600-meter run in 4:45.25 at the Division 1 state meet this past season. The state championship in the 1600 was Howell's third consecutive in the event and her winning time ranked as the nation's No. 11 performance among prep competitors in 2019 at the time of her selection. A devoted member of her church youth group, Howell has volunteered on behalf of area retirement homes and South Chagrin Reservation conservation efforts. "Winning any event at the state championship level is a unique accomplishment; winning two events scheduled within fifty minutes of each other speaks to a different level of talent, work ethic, and focus," said Solon distance coach Matt Wiczorek. "Olivia Howell is one of the most accomplished runners in Ohio high school track and field history." Howell has maintained a 3.51 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Illinois beginning 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Howell joins recent Gatorade Ohio Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Abby Steiner (2017-18, Dublin Coffman High School), Molly Leppelmeier (2016-17, McComb High School), Abby Steiner (2015-16, Dublin Coffman High School), Karrington Winters (2014-15, New Albany High School) and Allyson Simmons (2013-14, Fairless High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Howell also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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 www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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