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**ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Jake Benninghoff of Rogers High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Benninghoff is the third Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Rogers 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 Benninghoff as Arkansas' best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Benninghoff 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 6-foot-3, 185-pound senior captured a pair of individual titles at the Class 7A state meet this spring, leading the Mountaineers to a fourth-place finish as a team. Benninghoff won the high jump with a clearance of six feet, four inches, as well as the long jump, soaring a season-best 22-4.75. He was undefeated in both events in 2017 and his personal-best clearance of 6-10 in the high jump at the Class 7A West regionals ranked as the nation's No. 40 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection.

Benninghoff has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track and field programs. "Jake Benninghoff is incredibly gifted in the sport of track & field," said Rogers High School head coach Carlton Efurd. "As good as he is, he was always trying to find new ways to improve. Then he would take that knowledge and try to pass it on to his teammates to make them better too."

Benninghoff has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Texas Tech 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Benninghoff joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Zach Jewell (2015-16, Mena High School), Henri Murphy (2014-15, Dollarway High School), Brandon Workman (2013-14, Rogers High School), Mark Guffin (2012-13, Little Rock Christian Academy), Chase Lamers (2011-12, Rogers High School), Andrew Irwin (2010-11 & 2009-10, Mt. Ida High School), Caleb Cross (2008-09, Newport High School), Jason Pelletier (2007-08, Bryant High School), and Spencer McCorkel (2006-07, Bryant High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jake will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.