

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

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

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Vernon Turner of Yukon High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Turner is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Yukon 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 Turner as Oklahoma's 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, Turner 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-2, 170-pound senior won the high jump at the Class 6A state meet this past season with a clearance of 7 feet, 4 inches. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Turner cleared a personal-best 7-6 at the Yukon Classic, which ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection and represents the second-highest clearance in U.S. prep history. He also won the high jump at the Great Southwest Classic and finished unbeaten on the season, reaching at least 7-0 in every meet.

Also a basketball standout, Turner has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports camps. "Vernon is a once-in-a-lifetime athlete," said Yukon jumps coach Kevin Ritter. "He has done things that no one in Oklahoma has ever done before. He has jumped seven feet or higher in 12 meets in a row. I don't think there has ever been a prep jumper as consistent as he is."

Turner has maintained a 3.50 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to on an athletic scholarship at the University of Oklahoma 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.

Two-time winner Turner joins Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ben Barrett (2014-15, Norman North High School), Kevin Roddy (2013-14, Duncan High School), Bo Farrow (2012-13, Broken Arrow High School), Bryce Robinson (2011-12, Edmond Memorial High School), Gunnar Nixon (2010-11 & 2009-10, Edmond Santa Fe High School), Jack Whitt (2008-09, Norman North High School), and Geoffrey Tabor (2007-08 & 2006-07, Ardmore High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Vernon 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).