

## **RED OAK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE TEXAS GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Zahria Bernard of Red Oak High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Texas Girls Track and Field Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Bernard as Texas’ best high school girls track and field athlete and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Sanya Richards (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida), Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (2015-16 & 2016-17, Union Catholic Regional High School, New Jersey) and Jane Hedengren (2024-25, Timpview High School, Utah).

The 5-foot-5 sophomore sprinter won the 100- and 200-meter dash titles at the Class 5A state meet this past season, leading the Hawks to second-place as a team. Bernard’s winning time of 23.07 seconds in the 200 was a personal-best and ranked No. 8 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring. At the Nike Outdoor Nationals, she took third in the 100 in a personal-best 11.53, earning All-American honors and posting a time that ranked No. 38 nationally.

A member of her school’s chapter of the National Technical Honor Society, Bernard has volunteered locally with Oak Leaf Community Cleanup as part of community beautification initiatives. She has also donated her time by working at the DISD concession booth to help raise funds for various projects. “Just when it appeared mighty Texas might somehow get shut out of the girls’ awards haul at Nike Outdoor Nationals, Zahria Bernard stepped forward at just the right time to rep the Lone Star State in fine fashion,” said Rich Gonzalez, PrepCalTrack editor. “Only a sophomore, she’s positioned to be one of the nation’s very best next year.”

Bernard has maintained a weighted 5.78 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. 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 winners in each sport.

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 \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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