

## **BENTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 26, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Brian Burns of Bentonville High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Arkansas Boys 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 Burns as Arkansas’ best high school boys track and field athlete and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Alan Webb (2000-01, South Lakes High School, Virginia), Kerron Clement (2002-03, Laporte High School, Texas) and Tate Taylor (2024-25, Harlan High School, Texas).

The 6-foot-2, 135-pound senior won Class 6A state titles in the 800- and 1600-meter runs this past season, leading the Tigers to the team championship. The 2025-26 Gatorade State Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, Burns broke the 4-minute mile at the HOKA Festival of Miles with a time of 3:59.70, which ranked No. 3 nationally among prep boys competitors this spring and ranks No. 27 in prep history. He also broke the state record in the 3200 with a time of 8:41.38 at the Arcadia Invitational and took third in the 1500-meter run at the USATF Under-20 Championships, clocking a 3:50.52.

A member of his school’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Future Farmers of America chapters, Burns completed an IT consulting internship with AIM Consulting in Rogers. He has also volunteered locally in association with a Brooks partnership, serving as a mentor to youth distance-running athletes. “After multiple ultra-close calls and mounting pressure, Burns came through like a champ at the HOKA Festival of Miles to smash the 4-minute mile barrier, joining older brother and former Gatorade State POY Conor as the only sub-4 siblings in prep history,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor at PrepCalTrack.com. “With aspiring younger brother Sean coming up through the ranks, we can always hope for more history.”

Burns has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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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