

PATRIOT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA BOYS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 26, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Henry Birge of Patriot High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Virginia 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 Birge as Virginia’s 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, 145-pound senior middle distance and distance talent won the gold medal in the 800-meter run at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor this past season, breaking the tape in 1:48.32, which ranked No. 5 nationally among prep boys competitors this spring. Birge won the 1600 and took second in the 800 at the Class 6 state meet, leading the Pioneers to a runner-up finish as a team. His best 1600 clocking of 4:05.67 in 2026 ranked No. 20 nationally and his personal-best mile time of 4:10.09 ranked No. 96.

An accomplished singer who performs with the Patriot Singers Choir, Birge has volunteered locally at the Haymarket Regional Food Pantry and as an elementary school mentor. “Henry competes fearlessly and brings inspiration to our entire team,” said James DeMarco, head coach of Patriot High School. “He never misses practice, always wants to do more and listens. He’s been a coach’s dream.”

Birge has maintained a weighted 4.30 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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 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.

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