

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**POCA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2015) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Christian Buckley of Poca High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Buckley is the first Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Poca 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 Buckley as West Virginia'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, Buckley joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The returning Gatorade State Track & Field Athlete of the Year, the 6-foot-3, 235-pound senior set a pair of meet records in winning the shot put and discus throw at the Class AA state meet for a third straight year, leading the Dots to a second-place finish as a team. Buckley launched the discus 180 feet, 9 inches and hurled the shot 61-1.5 inches, the latter of which ranked as the nation's No. 34 throw among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection. At the Friends of Coal Relays, Buckley set a state record in the discus with a toss of 185-4, which ranked No. 37 nationally at the time of his selection. He broke a 30-year-old West Virginia prep record set by 1996 Olympic champion Randy Barnes.

Buckley has maintained a weighted 4.25 GPA in the classroom and graduated No. 1 in his class. The Poca High student body president and a National Merit Scholar finalist, he has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and as a youth track coach.

"Christian Buckley was very good, to say the least," said Chad Feathers, head coach of Byrd High. "He did very well and challenged himself even though no other competitor was throwing distances anywhere near him."

Buckley has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on an athletic scholarship at the University of Louisville 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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 Buckley joins Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jacob Burcham (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Cabell Midland High School), Brandon Franklin (2009-10, Liberty), Zach Tennant (2008-09, North Marion), Eric Myers (2007-08, Sissonville), and Terrell Martin (2006-07, Hurricane High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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).

###