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**MENA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Zach Jewell of Mena High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Jewell is the first Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Mena 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 Jewell as Arkansas'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, Jewell 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 5-foot-9, 140-pound senior sprinter and jumper won three individual titles at the Class 4A state meet this spring, leading the Bearcats to a fifth-place finish as a team. Jewell notched victories in the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.84, the 200-meter dash in 21.78 and the long jump, soaring 23 feet, 4.25 inches. He also took third in the triple jump with a leap of 44 feet, 5.5 inches. The 2016 All-Arkansas Prep Male Track Athlete of the Year, he earned Meet of Champions victories in both the 100 (10.70) and the 200 (21.37) to cap off an undefeated season in the sprints this spring. For good measure, he took gold in the Meet of Champions long jump with a leap of 22-10.75.

Jewell has maintained a 3.61 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, he is an avid hunter and fisherman and has participated in competitive archery.

"Zach Jewell is an extremely motivated young man," said Mena High head coach Aaron Pennington. "His ability to consistently perform at the highest level has set him apart. He has improved tremendously over the last couple of years and he will continue to improve thanks to his work ethic."

Jewell has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Central Arkansas 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.

Jewell joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Henri Murphy (2014-15, Dollarway High School), Brandon Workman (2013-14, Rogers High School), Mark Guffin (2012-13, Little Rock Christian Academy), Chase Lamers (2011-12, Rogers High School), Andrew Irwin (2010-11 & 2009-10, Mt. Ida High School), Caleb Cross (2008-09, Newport High School), Jason Pelletier (2007-08, Bryant High School), and Spencer McCorkel (2006-07, Bryant 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).

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