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**YUKON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Vernon Turner of Yukon High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Turner is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Yukon 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 Turner as Oklahoma'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, Turner 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 6-foot-1, 170-pound junior won the high jump at the Class 6A state meet this past season, breaking the state record with a clearance of 7 feet, 4.5 inches. Turner's season-best clearance ranked as the nation's No. 1 performance among prep competitors in 2016 at the time of his selection and is the highest by a high school athlete in the last seven years. He also won the high jump at the regional championships, the Central Oklahoma Conference meet, the Midwest City Invitational, the Yukon Classic, the Yukon Sundowner meet, the Zebra Invitational and the Bishop McGuinness Invitational.

Turner has maintained a 3.31 GPA in the classroom. Also a basketball standout, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports camps.

"I basically grabbed Vernon out of the hallway his freshman year and guilt-tripped him into coming out for track," said Yukon jumps coach Kevin Ritter. "He's really only jumped for two months a year since then, and he's gone from five feet in his first meet to No. 1 in the country in the span of 27 meets."

Turner will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Turner joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Ben Barrett (2014-15, Norman North High School), Kevin Roddy (2013-14, Duncan High School), Bo Farrow (2012-13, Broken Arrow High School), Bryce Robinson (2011-12, Edmond Memorial High School), Gunnar Nixon (2010-11 & 2009-10, Edmond Santa Fe High School), Jack Whitt (2008-09, Norman North High School), and Geoffrey Tabor (2007-08 & 2006-07, Ardmore 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.

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