

**BILOXI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Cameron O'Neal of Biloxi High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. O'Neal is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Biloxi 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 field, distinguishes O'Neal as Mississippi'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 July, O'Neal joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 6-foot-2, 158-pound senior won all three events he entered in the abbreviated 2020 outdoor season, clocking PRs in the 100- and 200-meter dash. During the 2019 postseason, he took seventh in the long jump at the USATF U20 Outdoor Championships. At the Class 6A state meet last spring, O'Neal won the long jump and took fifth in the 200-meter dash. His personal-best leap of 24 feet, 3 inches in the long jump ranked as the nation's No. 40 performance among outdoor prep competitors in 2019. A Clarion Ledger All-State selection, he set a PR in the triple jump in 2019 (43-0.5) as well.

Also a basketball standout, O'Neal helped the Indians to a final four appearance in 2020 and a combined record of 65-7 over the past two years. He has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service projects, including the Loaves and Fishes community center for the needy, Jack and Jill of America and the St. Therese Catholic Church. He's also donated his time to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, the Salvation Army Angel Tree initiative and by working at The Prospect Lab, a speed-improvement clinic for underprivileged youth. In addition, he's served as a math and reading tutor for elementary school students. Most recently, he helped organize a Black History Month program for area senior citizens, and led an effort by the senior class to participate in the inaugural Biloxi Cares About Animals event. "Cameron O'Neal is the returning Gatorade winner and nothing he's done since the end of last regular season suggests he shouldn't repeat," said Erik Boal, a DyeStat editor. "He finished an impressive 7th place in the long jump at last June's USATF U20 Outdoor Championships—in spite of falling more than 13 inches short of his career-best—and his PR in the 100 (10.47) during the abbreviated 2020 outdoor season would have ranked as the state's No. 1 clocking in the event in 2019."

O'Neal has maintained a GPA of 3.36 in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Georgia Tech.

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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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 O'Neal joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Cameron Crump (2017-18 & 2016-17, Strayhorn High School), DeMichael Harris (2015-16 & 2014-15, St. Aloysius High School) and Terrell Smith (2013-14, Vicksburg High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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