

**PRINCE GEORGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Javonte' Harding of Prince George High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Harding is the second Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Prince George 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 Harding as 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 July, Harding 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 5-foot-11, 170-pound senior broke the tape in the 55-meter dash at the 2020 Class 5 Indoor state meet, and his season- and personal-best 55 dash time of 6.30 seconds ranked as the nation's No. 5 mark among prep competitors during the 2020 indoor season. Harding earned All-American honors by capturing second in the 100-meter dash at the 2019 New Balance Nationals Outdoor. His clocking of 10.39 seconds represents the state's No. 3 mark in history among prep competitors. The 2019 Progress Index Athlete of the Year, he also ranked No. 22 nationally among prep competitors this winter in the 300-meter dash.

A member of his school's DECA club, Harding has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth sports coach. "You can always tell the individuals who display the intangibles to be successful, the passion to be the best, set goals and the commitment and pursuit of excellence," said Rod Stafford, head coach of Varina High School. "Those are the things I saw in Javonte'. He is a great, young, humble athlete."

Harding has maintained a 3.14 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at North Carolina A&T University.

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.

Harding joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year EJ Richardson III (2018-19, Bethel High School), Daiqwaun Faircloth (2017-18, Nansemond River High School), Brandon McGorty (2016-17, Chantilly High School), Grant Holloway (2015-16 & 2014-15, Grassfield High School), and John Warren (2013-14, Prince George 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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