

**BENTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (July 2, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sydney Billington of Bentonville High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Billington is the first Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Bentonville 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 Billington as Arkansas' best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Billington 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 senior won the high jump at the Class 6A state meet this past season, leading the Tigers to a first-place finish as a team. At the time of her selection, Billington's top high jump of 5 feet, 10 inches at the Arkansas National Guard Bulldog Relays ranked No. 8 nationally among 2021 prep competitors in the event. She also won the high jump at the AAU Indoor National Championships in March.

Billington has volunteered locally as a youth track coach, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Sydney has worked very hard this year to perfect her craft in the high jump," said Randy Ramaker, head coach of Bentonville High. "She has been very consistent this year and trained hard in the offseason to get stronger and more explosive."

Billington has maintained a weighted 3.66 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Billington joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Cassidy Mooneyhan (2019-20, Pea Ridge High School), Brea Clark (2018-19, El Dorado High School), and Tiana Wilson (2017-18 & 2016-17, Hamburg High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Billington has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Billington is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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