

**ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Nyalaam Jok of Annandale High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Jok is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Annandale 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 Jok as Minnesota's 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, Jok 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 senior won the high jump and long jump at the Class A state meet, leading the Cardinals to a second-place finish as a team. At the time of her selection, Jok's winning high jump clearance of 6 feet matched the state record and ranked No. 1 nationally among prep competitors in the event in 2021. Her state-title-winning leap of 20-0.5 long jump ranked No. 17 nationally. Jok also placed second in the 100-meter hurdles at the state meet and ran the anchor leg for Annandale's third-place 4x100-meter relay team. She won the Class AA high jump state title as an eighth-grader representing Osseo High, and the Class A state title as a freshman for Annandale.

Active in the local Sudanese community, Jok has volunteered as a youth track coach. "Nyalaam is a fantastic jumper and hurdler," said Tait Christensen, head coach of Litchfield High. "She is very explosive."

Jok has maintained a weighted 3.88 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Jok joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Madison Schmidt (2019-20 & 2018-19, Blaine High School), Emily Kompelien (2017-18, Edina High School), and Anna Keefer (2016-17, St. Michael-Albertville High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Jok has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Jok 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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