

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

CHICAGO (July 8, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sam Hurley of Fayetteville High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Hurley is the third Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Fayetteville 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 Hurley as Arkansas' best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Hurley 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-1, 165-pound junior won the decathlon at the Arkansas Decathlon & Heptathlon Championships this past season, scoring a total of 6,713 points. At the time of his selection, Hurley's score ranked No. 2 nationally among 2021 prep competitors in the event. Hurley also swept the high jump, long jump and pole vault events at the Class 6A state meet, leading the Bulldogs to the team title. He came within 0.01 seconds of winning a fourth individual gold in the 110-meter hurdles. His personal-best high jump of 6 feet, 10 inches ranked No. 16 nationally at the time of his selection.

Hurley has volunteered locally with the Salvation Army and at the Donald W. Reynolds Boys & Girls Club of Fayetteville. He has also donated his time as a St. Jude Hospital Ambassador and with the Special Olympics. "Sam Hurley has become our standard of excellence," said Drew Yoakum, head coach of Fayetteville High. "Sam is Arkansas' top track athlete this year."

Hurley has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. He 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 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.

Hurley joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Isaiah Sategna (2019-20, Fayetteville High School), Haze Farmer (2018-19, Lake Hamilton High School), Camren Fischer (2017-18, Fayetteville High School), and Jake Benninghoff (2016-17, Rogers High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Hurley has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Hurley 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, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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