

**EDWARDSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Brandon Battle of Edwardsville High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Battle is the second Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Edwardsville 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 Battle as Illinois 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, Battle 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, 160-pound senior became just the second athlete to ever sweep the sprinting events at the Class 3A state meet this past season. Battle broke the tape in the 100-meter dash in 10.61 seconds, captured the 200 in 21.65 and took the 400 in 46.48, the latter of which ranked as the nation's No. 3 performance among 2021 prep competitors. He graduated as the state indoor record-holder with a clocking of 47.88 at the Illinois Meet of Champions Showcase in March.

Battle has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track programs and his church's bible school. "Brandon's knowledge of track and field is top notch and his work ethic is like no other athlete I have coached in over 20 years as a head coach," said Edwardsville coach Chad Lakatos. "He embraced every workout and not once did he ever question the events he was placed in."

Battle has maintained a 3.13 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Eastern Illinois 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 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.

Battle joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Josh Methner (2019-20, John Hersey High School), Marcellus Moore (2018-19 2017-18, Plainfield North High School), and Cameron Ruiz (2016-17, Lakes Community High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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