

**OAKLAND MILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **Baidy Ba of Oakland Mills High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Ba is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Oakland Mills 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 Ba as Maryland's 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, Ba 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, 120-pound senior won the 800-meter run and the 3200-meter run at the Class 3A state meet this past season, leading the Scorpions to the state championship as a team. Ba broke the tape in the 800 with a time of 1:52.33 and took the 3200 in 9:11.32. He also anchored a second-place 4x400 relay quartet.

Ba has volunteered locally on behalf of a soup kitchen and a community clean-up initiative. "Baidy competed in the 3200, the 800 and the 4x400 relay in a span of less than three hours, but he persevered and helped lead his team to a state championship with dominating performances," said Oakland Mills distance coach Brian Shadrick. "Having only started running since his sophomore year, he has barely tapped a deep well of potential."

Ba has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Kent State University 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.

Ba joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Ashton Allen (2019-20, Bullis School), Andre Turay (2018-19, Bullis School), Kieran McDermott (2017-18, Bel Air High School), and Kollin Smith (2016-17, Frederick Douglass High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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