

**LEE'S SUMMIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Johnny Brackins Jr. of Lee's Summit High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Brackins Jr. is the second Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Lee's Summit 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 Brackins Jr. as Missouri'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, Brackins Jr. 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-4, 175-pound senior won three individual events at the Class 5 state meet, leading the Tigers to a third place finish as a team. Brackins Jr. set a meet record with his time of 13.79 seconds in the 110-meter high hurdles, which ranked as the nation's No. 7 performance among 2021 prep competitors. He also soared 23 feet, 8.25 inches to win the long jump and captured the triple jump with a leap of 48-3.5. His career-best effort of 25-3.25 in the long jump at sectionals broke the Class 5 record and ranked No. 2 nationally.

Brackins Jr. has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics. "Johnny is the most talented track athlete that Lee's Summit High School has ever produced," said Lee's Summit coach Craig Heeney. "His jumping ability, hurdling ability and sprinting talent makes him incredibly versatile. The hard part is trying to figure out what events to put him in each meet."

Brackins Jr. has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Southern California 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.

Brackins Jr. joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Brandon Miller (2019-20, John Burroughs School), Justin Robinson (2018-19, Hazelwood West High School), KC Lightfoot (2017-18, Lee's Summit High School), and Austin Hindman (2016-17, Lafayette High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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