

**BISHOP GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 **Zachariah Branch of Bishop Gorman High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Nevada Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Branch is the second Gatorade Nevada Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Gorman 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 Branch as Nevada'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, Branch 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-10, 172-pound sophomore swept the 100- and 200-meter dashes and the long jump events at the Class 5A Southern Regional meet, leading the Gaels to a fifth-place finish as a team. At the time of his selection, Branch's personal-best long jump of 24 feet at the regional meet ranked No. 31 nationally among 2021 prep competitors. His season-best 200 time of 21.01 seconds ranked No. 26 nationally, while his personal-best clocking of 10.33 in the 100 at the BYU Invitational was the fastest time ever recorded by a high school athlete in Utah, and ranked No. 27 nationally.

Branch has volunteered locally with the Salvation Army and he has also donated his time to the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. "Zachariah is a tremendous athlete with rare speed that carries over to the jumps as well," said Mark Tondryk, head coach of Coronado High. "He is going to get even better which is scary from an opposing coach's perspective."

Branch has maintained a 3.16 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior 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.

Branch joins recent Gatorade Nevada Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Justin Watterson (2019-20, Coronado High School), Corey Moore (2018-19 & 2017-18, Liberty High School), and Zachary Stallings (2016-17, McQueen High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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