

**NOTTINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 **Shamali Whittle of Nottingham High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Whittle is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Nottingham 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 Whittle as New Jersey'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, Whittle 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, 165-pound junior was the only double-winner at the state Meet of Champions this past season, capturing the 100-meter dash in 10.55 seconds and taking the 200 in 20.95, the latter of which ranked as the nation's No. 10 wind-legal performance among 2021 prep competitors. Whittle's personal best of 13.86 in the 110-meter high hurdles ranked No. 9 nationally.

Whittle has volunteered locally on behalf of a middle school track program. "Shamali is relentless and self-motivated," said Nottingham coach Shaquille Sanderson. "His work ethic and focus is what drives him to be a phenomenal student-athlete and a positive influencer in and outside his community."

Whittle has maintained a 3.51 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.

Whittle joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Liam Murphy (2019-20, Allentown High School), Sean Dolan (2018-19, Hopewell Valley Central High School), Nickolas Mirabelli (2017-18, Rancocas Valley Regional High School), and Cory Poole (2016-17, East Orange Campus High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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