

**WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Elias Gerald** of **Westlake High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Utah Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Gerald is the first Gatorade Utah Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Westlake 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 Gerald as Utah'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, Gerald 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 (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 6-foot-4, 180-pound senior won the high jump and long jump for a second straight year at the Class 6A state meet this past season, leading the Thunder to an eighth-place finish as a team. Gerald also took second at the state meet in the 110-meter high hurdles. He set a Class 6A state record in the high jump with a leap of 7 feet, 0.25 inches at the Utah County Invitational, a mark that, at the time of his selection, ranked No. 5 nationally among prep competitors in 2022. Also the Nike Indoor Nationals champion in the high jump, his season-best long jump of 23-3.5 at the Airshow Invitationals ranked No. 61 in the country.

Gerald has volunteered locally as a llama trainer and on behalf of Lifting Hands International, providing humanitarian aid to refugees both at home and abroad. He has also donated his time as a youth sports coach and official. "Elias is an amazing athlete," said Brad Molen, head coach of Lone Peak High. "What sets him apart from other athletes is not so much his athleticism as it is how he makes his events look easy. He definitely has been fun to watch the last couple of years."

Gerald has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Gerald joins recent Gatorade Utah Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Austin Klingler (2020-21, West Jordan High School), Thomas Boyden (2019-20, Skyline High School), Blake Freeland (2018-19, Herriman High School), and Dallin Draper (2017-18, Delta High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Gerald has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Gerald is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.