

**UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **Josh Edwards** of **University High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Edwards is the first Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from University 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 Edwards as West Virginia'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, Edwards 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year in track and field, the 5-foot-7, 120-pound senior swept the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter runs at the Class AAA state meet this past season. Edwards also ran the third leg in the 4x400-meter relay in the meet's final event, helping the Hawks earn the final points they needed to win the team title. A three-time Gatorade Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, Edwards broke his own state record in the 3,200 at the Mountaineer Showcase with a time of 8:45.61, which ranked No. 7 nationally among prep competitors at the time of his selection. He also set a state record in the 3,000-meter run at the Penn Relays in 8:20.31, which ranked No. 11 in the country this spring.

Edwards has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, and as a youth running coach. "Josh continued to be a team leader and led us to the team title," said Ed Frohnepfel, head coach of University High. "He contributed specifically by running the 4x400 at the state meet. That relay is the last event at the state meet, and while the 400 is not one of his primary events, his participation helped the team to get third place, earning the six team points (we needed) to win the team title by five points. Josh secured the team title, but cost himself the meet's individual high-point award. He stated several times that his primary focus was to bring the AAA track championship back to University High School."

Edwards has maintained a weighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

Two-time winner Edwards joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Sebastian Spencer (2019-20, Weir High School), Gavin Beverage (2018-19, Cabell Midland High School), and Luke Nichols (2017-18, Nitro 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, Edwards 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. Edwards 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.

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