

**SUMRALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 28, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Heidi Hudson** of **Sumrall High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Hudson is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Sumrall 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 Hudson as Mississippi's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Hudson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jasmine Moore (2018-19, Lake Ridge High School, Texas), Sydney McLaughlin (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Union Catholic High School, N.J.), and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa).

The 5-foot-10 senior won Class 4A state titles in the long jump and high jump this past season, including a state-record 6-foot clearance in the high jump, which matched the nation's No. 2 mark among girls prep competitors in 2023. Hudson also soared 20 feet, 0.25 inches in the long jump, making her one of two jumpers in state history to break 20 feet (there were no wind instruments present). She earned All-American honors at Nike Outdoor Nationals, finishing sixth in the heptathlon (4,715 points).

A member of the Sumrall High Beta Club as well as the Multicultural Youth Club and Environmental Club, Hudson has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Heidi Hudson not only secured high jump and long jump titles for the third year in a row at the Class 4A state finals, but she did so in memorable fashion," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "Hudson became the first Mississippi prep girl athlete to reach a 6-foot clearance in the high jump and joined U.S. Olympian and 2011 Byhalia High graduate Erica Bougard as the only long jumpers in state history to surpass 20 feet under all conditions."

Hudson has maintained a 3.8 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on scholarship at Western Carolina University 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.

Hudson joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Kennedi Sanders (2021-22 & 2020-21, Madison Ridgeland Academy) and Brooklyn Biancamano (2019-20 & 2018-19, Long Beach High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).