

**VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Alex Leath** of **Vestavia Hills High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Leath is the second Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Vestavia Hills 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 Leath as Alabama'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, Leath joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Nico Young (2019-20, Newbury Park High School, Calif.), Michael Norman (2015-16 & 2014-15, Vista Murrieta High School, Calif.), Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas).

The 6-foot-1, 160-pound senior won the 800- and 1600-meter events at the Class 7A state meet this past season, leading the Rebels to a second-place finish as a team. Leath's winning time in the 1600 of 4:07.33 ranked No. 19 nationally among prep competitors in 2023. He took seventh in the 800 at the Brooks PR Invitational in a state-record 1:49.84, which ranked No. 15 nationally. He also earned dual All-American honors at Nike Outdoor Nationals with a sixth-place finish in the 800 followed by his anchor leg for a 4x800 relay quartet that took second in a state-record time of 7:30.68.

Leath has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit cancer research in association with Vestavia Rise, a school initiative. "Alex Leath established himself as one of the top middle-distance talents in the nation this spring, breaking two state records to rank among Alabama's all-time track greats," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. "He smashed a 16-year-old state record in the 800 before capping his senior season by anchoring the Rebels' 4x800 quartet to the third-fastest performance in national prep history at Nike Outdoor Nationals."

Leath has maintained a weighted 4.11 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

Leath joins recent Gatorade Alabama Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Maddox Hamm (2021-22, Scottsboro High School), Ethan Strand (2020-21, Vestavia Hills High School), Josiah Harry (2019-20, Mobile Christian School), and Charles Lewis (2018-19, Sparkman 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.