

**SOUTHERN BOONE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Connor Burns** of **Southern Boone High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Burns is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Southern Boone 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 Burns as Missouri'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, Burns 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 state's returning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2, 160-pound senior broke one national record along with three state marks this past season, leading the Eagles to a state runner-up finish as a team in Class 3. Burns crossed the line in fifth with a time of 13:37.30 in the 5000-meter event at the On Running Track Fest, breaking a national record that had stood for 19 years. Less than a month later, he raced to the third-fastest 2-mile in U.S. prep history when he clocked 8:34.33 to take second at the Brooks PR meet. He won state titles in the 1600 and 3200 this spring, breaking the tape in 4:13.52 and 9:20.14, respectively.

Burns has volunteered locally at a food bank and has served as a peer math tutor. "Already one of just five prep boys in history to break the 4-minute-mile on multiple occasions, Connor Burns further solidified his place as an all-time elite performer by taking down (four-time Olympian and two-time medalist) Galen Rupp's long standing 5000-meter national record," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. "As testament to his unprecedented range, Burns is the only high schooler to rank among the top 10 in history both indoors and outdoors in the mile, the 2-mile and the 5000. Simply remarkable."

Burns has maintained a 3.94 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 Burns joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Johnny Brackins Jr. (2020-21, Lee's Summit High School), Brandon Miller (2019-20, John Burroughs School School), and Justin Robinson (2018-19, Hazelwood West 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.