

**STEVENS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Simeon Birnbaum** of **Stevens High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Birnbaum is the sixth Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Stevens 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 Birnbaum as South Dakota'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, Birnbaum 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-1, 145-pound senior produced an unbeaten season against prep competitors that left his name all over the national record books. Birnbaum won the 3200-meter run with his 8:34.10 effort at the Arcadia Invitational, which was the U.S. No. 1 time among prep boys in 2023. That 3200 time set a National Federation of State High School Associations record, eclipsing a 15-year-old mark set by 2007-08 Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, German Fernandez. Birnbaum also won the 2-mile run at the Brooks PR Invitational in 8:34.10, which ranked No. 1 nationally among prep competitors in 2023 and No. 2 in U.S. prep history. In addition, he ranked No. 1 nationally and No. 4 all-time in the mile thanks to his 3:57.53 clocking that won the HOKA Festival of Miles. Birnbaum cashed in with a national title in the mile at Nike Outdoor Nationals (4:02.22).

In a 1500 race against a field of professionals at Nike Outdoor Nationals, he took third with a time of 3:37.93—the No. 2 clocking in U.S. prep history in the event. In his home state, he won the 800 and 1600 at the Class AA state meet, leading the Raiders to a third-place finish as a team. That winning 1600 clocking of 4:02.78 was U.S. No. 2 this spring.

Birnbaum has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit the Rushmore Youth Thunder Hockey program. He has also donated his time as a youth track mentor. "Simeon Birnbaum put on a MasterClass in distance-running excellence this spring, perfectly executing race plan after race plan at major meets to compile the most impressive season-long résumé in the distance events in prep history," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. "This has truly become a Golden Age for high school distance running, and Simeon raised the bar even higher this spring."

Birnbaum has maintained a weighted 3.92 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on 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 Birnbaum joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Cooper Mack (2020-21, Watertown High School) and Tyler Hiatt (2019-20 & 2018-19, Lincoln 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.

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