

**WOODBERRY FOREST SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Rodney Lora** of **Woodberry Forest School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Lora is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Woodberry Forest 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 Lora as 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, Lora 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-4, 270-pound senior won the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division 1 title in the shot put in dramatic fashion, leading the Tigers to the team title. Lora broke the school record on each of his final three throws at the state meet, including what was a nearly four-foot improvement in the final round. His winning toss of 66 feet, 1 inch ranked No. 7 nationally among prep competitors in 2023. He also took second in the discus at states, launching the disc 158-8.

Lora has volunteered locally on behalf of the Appalachia Service Project, repairing a family's ceiling damaged by a storm. He has also donated his time by serving food to those in need at a shelter in New York City. "In the final meet of his high school career, Rodney Lora came up big," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. "Entering the VISAA Championships as the school record-holder, Lora achieved a new personal best in each of his final three throws. Within a matter of minutes, Lora went from No. 16 in state history in the shot put to No. 2, and he finished the season ranked among the nation's top 10 prep competitors in the event in 2023."

Lora has maintained a 3.45 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Lora joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Deondre Hardy (2021-22, Nansemond River High School), Michael Bourne (2020-21, Cosby High School), Javonte' Harding (2019-20, Prince George High School), and EJ Richardson III (2018-19, Bethel 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.