

**HORTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Ben Smith** of **Hortonville High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Smith is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Hortonville 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 Smith as Wisconsin'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, Smith 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-2, 225-pound junior won the shot put and finished second in the discus throw at Nike Outdoor Nationals this past season, earning All-American honors in both events. Smith's winning shot put throw of 68 feet, 4 inches landed just shy of his personal-best throw of 68-10.5 in May, which ranked No. 1 nationally among prep competitors in 2023. Smith's second-place discus effort at nationals soared 210-4 to set a state record and ranked No. 2 nationally this spring. He won the shot put and took second in the discus at the Division 1 state meet, leading the Polar Bears to a fourth-place finish as a team.

A member of the Hortonville High Leadership Council, Smith has volunteered locally at the Catfish Extravaganza in association with the Greenville Lions Club. He has also donated his time installing and repairing lakeside docks for senior citizens in his community. "Ben Smith was King of the Ring in his junior season, putting the shot nearly 69 feet to lead the nation among prep boys in that event this spring," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. "He finished 2023 with four of the top six shot put efforts of the year. Ben's excellence carried over to the discus as well, where he notched the No. 2 mark nationally this season. It's rare to have a weights specialist truly excel at the highest levels in both events."

Smith has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Drew Regnier (2021-22, Waunakee Community High School), Jackson Acker (2020-21, Verona Area High School), Davis Wenthe (2019-20, Gale-Etrick-Trempealeau High School), and Drew Bosley (2018-19, Homestead 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.