

**ELKHORN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 27, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sam Thomas** of **Elkhorn North High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Thomas is the second Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Elkhorn North High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Thomas as Nebraska’s best high school boys track & field player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Alan Webb (2000-01, South Lakes High School, Va.), Kerron Clement (2002-03, Laporte High School, Texas) and Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.).

The 6-foot-6, 285-pound senior throws specialist swept the discus and the shot put events at the Class B state meet, leading the Wolves to fifth place as a team. At the Kruger May Invite, Thomas launched personal-best efforts in both events, putting the shot a state-record 66 feet, 3 inches, which ranked No. 12 nationally among prep boys competitors this spring at the time of his selection. His discus throw of 186-4 ranked No. 69 nationally.

Also a member of the National Honor Society and an All-State football player, Thomas has volunteered locally on behalf of the Steadfast Omaha Church Boot Camp, which provides opportunities for youth to connect with one another while sharing ideas and opinions in a safe and caring environment. He has also donated his time assisting with tornado cleanup and at youth football camps. “A state record and a top national rankings in two events is more than 95 percent of high school track athletes even hope for in a given season,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack. “Thomas graduates as one of the best combo throwers in state history.”

Thomas has maintained a 4.02 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Northern Iowa 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.

Thomas joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Caiden Fredrick (2022-23, Papillion-La Vista South High School), Jaylen Lloyd (2021-22, Omaha Central High School), Gabe Hinrichs (2020-21, Elkhorn South High School) and Tyler Brown (2019-20, Lincoln East High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).