

**CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 **Michael Lunsford** of **Cabell Midland High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Lunsford is the third Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Cabell Midland 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 Lunsford as West Virginia’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-2, 250-pound senior throws specialist broke a 39-year-old state record in the shot put this past season, launching the apparatus 68 feet, six inches to eclipse the previous mark set by two-time Olympian and Atlanta Games gold medalist Randy Barnes in 1985. Lunsford’s margin of break was more than 18 inches and ranked No. 9 among prep boys nationally this spring. He also won the state shot put title at the Class AAA state meet with a throw of 65.3.75 and also took second in the discus with a 156-7 effort, leading the Scarlet Knights to the team title. He threw 64-3 or further four times this spring—a distance only 23 boys managed nationally in 2024.

Lunsford has volunteered locally as a youth football coach and mentor. “Michael elevated the standard for throws in West Virginia,” said Poca High School head coach Kyle Gwinn. “Just like Randy Barnes, he’s put West Virginia on the map. In my 11 years of coaching throws, I’ve never seen a shot put travel that far with that much speed, explosion and height. It was an absolute rocket to the moon and may still be in orbit.”

Lunsford has maintained a 3.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Ohio State University 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.

Lunsford joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Drew Zundell (2022-23, University High School), Josh Edwards (2021-22 & 2020-21, University High School) and Sebastian Spencer (2019-20, Weir 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).