

## **HORTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Benjamin Smith** of **Hortonville High School** is the **2023-24 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 celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Smith as Wisconsin'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, 255-pound senior throws specialist won the national championship in the discus at Nike Outdoor Nationals this past season, earning All-American honors in the process. Smith won the shot put at the USATF U20 Championships and also earned All-American honors in the shot at NON with a third-place finish. His top shot put effort of 75 feet, 1 inch ranked No. 1 nationally among prep competitors this spring, while his best discus throw of 208-11 ranked No. 2 in 2024.

A member of the Hortonville High School Student Leadership Council, Smith has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit Children's Wisconsin, an acute pediatric care hospital and he has donated his time as a youth football coach and youth wrestling scorekeeper. "Ben is the kind of athlete every coach dreams of having the opportunity to work with," said Kevin Sours, head coach of Hortonville High School. "Not just from the athletic accomplishments he has achieved, but also for his work ethic, his attitude and his commitment to becoming better and achieving new goals. He is a true student of his sport."

Smith has maintained a 3.91 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 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) and Davis Wenthe (2019-20, Gale-Etrick-Trempealeau 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).