

BENTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 25, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Matthew Shelly** of **Bentonville High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Shelly as Arkansas' best high school track & field athlete, and he joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Alan Webb (2000-01, South Lakes High School, Va.), Kerron Clement (2002-03, Laporte High School, Texas) and Christian Miller (2023-24, Creekside High School, Fl.).

The 5-foot-11, 140-pound senior distance talent won a national title and set a state record in the 3200-meter run at the RunningLane Track Championships this past season, clocking a time of 8:47.02, which ranked No. 7 nationally among boys prep competitors this spring. Shelly also set state records in the 1600 and mile this season. He broke the tape in the 800 and 1600 at the Class 6A state meet as well, leading the Tigers to the team title. His season came to an abrupt end at the HOKA Festival of Miles when he fell amidst the pack in an overcrowded field and broke his wrist and collarbone during the early moments of the mile run.

Shelly has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "What Matthew Shelly has accomplished for Arkansas distance running is truly remarkable," said Brad LaBass, head coach of Bentonville West High School. "Through years of dedication and steady development, he has risen to compete and succeed against the nation's top athletes. I've never seen him line up without the belief that he can win."

Shelly has maintained a 3.97 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete at Iowa 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 across 12 different high school sports – 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.

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 \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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 or follow us on social media on Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

###