

CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Isaiah Whitaker** of **Central Catholic High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Illinois 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 Whitaker as Illinois' 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 6-foot-2, 170-pound junior pole vault specialist set an all-class record for the state meet this past season in winning the IHSA Class A championship with a clearance of 17-6.5, leading the Saints to seventh place as a team. Whitaker also took fourth in the event at the USATF U20 Championships. His season-best mark of 17-10.5, which won the Chuck Danner Co-Ed Invitational, ranked No. 2 nationally among boys prep competitors this spring.

A member of his local chapter of the National Honor Society, Whitaker has volunteered locally with the Midwest Food Bank, the Tinervin Family Foundation and Loaves and Fishes—each of those initiatives is geared toward feeding the hungry. "Isaiah Whitaker kept his championship streak intact, earning his third consecutive state meet gold medal and All-American status with one year remaining in his prep career," said Rich Gonzalez, editor for PrepCalTrack.com.

Whitaker has maintained a 3.58 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 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](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

###