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

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Seth Hirsch of Millard West High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Hirsch is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Millard West High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the track, distinguishes Hirsch as Nebraska's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Hirsch joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-6, 110-pound senior distance runner captured an individual state title at the Class A state meet this spring, leading the Wildcats to a sixth-place finish as a team. Hirsch won the 3200-meter run with a time of 8:57.2 and took second in the 1600 in 4:14.1. The state's Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year as a sophomore in 2014-15, he also set a state record in the 3200 at May's Omaha Metro Conference Meet, breaking the tape in 8:54.12. His personal-best time of 8:55.28 in the 2-mile run at this month's Brooks PR Invitational ranked as the nation's No. 7 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection.

A member of the National Honor Society, Hirsch has volunteered locally on behalf of USA Cycling in association with the Jim Johnston Memorial Ride in addition to donating his time as a youth track and field coach. "Seth Hirsch is the hardest-working and most dedicated athlete I have ever coached," said Millard West head coach Colin Johnston. "He has the unique ability to continue pushing himself during hard workouts and races that is unmatched. His leadership has helped push his teammates and our entire program to new heights."

Hirsch has maintained a 4.21 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Wisconsin 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hirsch joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year K.J. Cotton (2015-16, 2014-15, Papillion-La Vista High School), Kenzo Cotton (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Papillion-La Vista High School), Ted Lampkin (2010-11 & 2009-10, Omaha Central High School), Mitchell Hunt (2008-09, Fremont High School), Brett Maher (2007-08, Kearney High School), and Lukas Hulett (2006-07, Bellevue East High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Seth will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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