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**WEST FARGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Andy Gravdahl of West Fargo High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year. Gravdahl is the second Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from West Fargo 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 field, distinguishes Gravdahl as North Dakota's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Gravdahl joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mitchell Trubisky (2012-13, Mentor High School, Ohio), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills High School, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga High School, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2014-15 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School, La.).

The 5-foot-11, 175-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,265 yards and 22 touchdowns this past season, leading the Packers to a 12-0 record and the Class 3A state championship. Gravdahl completed 153 of 247 passes and was intercepted seven times. He also rushed for 640 yards and 10 touchdowns on 69 carries, and was selected the Class 3A Senior Athlete of the Year.

Also a baseball standout, Gravdahl has volunteered locally on behalf of Olivet Lutheran Church. "Andy Gravdahl is the best high school quarterback I've seen in some time," said Jeremy Newton, head coach at Sheyenne High. "His throws are very accurate, he's a great leader and he can beat you with his feet if you have everything else covered."

Gravdahl has maintained a 3.46 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Gravdahl joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Football Players of the Year Brandon Metz (2016-17, West Fargo High School), Dalton Feeney (2015-16, Century High School), James Johannesson (2014-15 & 2013-14, Fargo South High School), Layne Johs (2012-13, Bismarck High School), Devin Coyle (2011-12, Mandan High School), Connor McGovern (2010-11, Shanley High School), and Esley Thorton (2009-10, Bismarck High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gravdahl 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.