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**FARGO SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 4, 2014) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced James Johannesson of Fargo South High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year. Johannesson is the third Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Fargo South 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 Johannesson as North Dakota's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Johannesson joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 6-foot-2, 215-pound senior running back led the Bruins to a 9-2 record and the Class AAA semifinals this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Football Player of the Year, Johannesson rushed for 2,072 yards and 32 touchdowns on 216 carries. He is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

Johannesson has maintained a 3.21 GPA in the classroom. Also a hockey and track standout, he has volunteered locally visiting nursing homes and assisting with youth hockey and football programs.

"His combination of size and speed is unparalleled in the state of North Dakota," said Jeremy Newton, head coach at West Fargo Sheyenne High. "He's the most dominant back I've seen at this level in a long time."

Johannesson has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Minnesota beginning in the fall of 2015.

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Two-time winner Johannesson joins Gatorade North Dakota Football Players of the Year Layne Johs (2012-13, Bismarck High School), Devin Coyle (2011-12, Mandan High School), Connor McGovern (2010-11, Shanley High School), Esley Thorton (2009-10, Bismarck), Brent Qvale (2008-09, Williston High School) and Josh Horner (2007-08, Fargo South) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

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