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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2015) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jon Tharaldsen of Bismarck High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Tharaldsen is the fifth Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Tharaldsen as North Dakota'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, Tharaldsen joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 6-foot-3, 220-pound throws specialist won the discus and the shot put at the Class A state meet this spring, launching the discus 167 feet, six inches and hurling the shot 62-11, leading the Demons to a third-place finish as a team at the state meet. The 2015 North Dakota High School Activities Association Senior Athlete of the Year, Tharaldsen took first in the shot put at the Howard Wood Dakota Relays, recording a throw of 59-0.5. His title-winning effort in the shot put at the state meet ranked as the nation's No. 12 performance among prep competitors in 2015 at the time of his selection.

Tharaldsen has maintained a 4.02 GPA and is ranked No. 1 in a class of 384 students. A member of the National Honor Society and a devoted parishioner in his church community, he has volunteered locally as a youth football coach.

"Jon Tharaldsen is an incredible student-athlete," said Bismarck head coach Darrell Anderson. "He takes no shortcuts to any task whether it's in the classroom, weight room or athletic field. His diligence, patience and tenacity have earned him well-deserved valedictorian and state championship honors. His gracious nature and mature conduct has also earned himself remarkable respect from his teachers, administrators, coaches and competitors.

Tharaldsen has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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 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.

Tharaldsen joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Landon Jochim (2013-14, Century High School), Jake Leingang (2012-13, Bismarck High School), Drew Wiseman (2011-12, Century High School), Brock Larson (2010-11, Fargo South High School), Brandon Barnes (2009-10, Bismarck), Ryan Todhunter (2008-09, Red River), Jason Duchsherer (2007-08, Bismarck), and Weston Leutz (2006-07, Century) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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