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**WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Mason Hericks of Watertown High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Hericks is the second Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Watertown 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 Hericks as South 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, Hericks 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 5-foot-9, 135-pound senior sprinter captured two individual championships this spring at the Class AA state meet and also anchored the winning 4x100-meter and 4x200-meter relay quartets to lead the Arrows to a second-place finish as a team. Hericks won the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.76 seconds and the 200-meter dash in 21.75. The 2016 Class AA Outstanding Track Performer at the state meet, he helped set a state record in the 4x100 relay, breaking the tape in 42.34. Watertown also set a meet record in the 4x200 (1:28.07).

Hericks has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished trumpet player and percussionist, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and his church youth group. He has also donated his time as a summer camp counselor.

"Mason Hericks is a true sportsman and great competitor," said Kevin Kroger, head coach at Harrisburg High. "We have competed numerous times against him in the last few years and he is always gracious in victory or defeat."

Hericks has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Hericks joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Brennan Schmidt (2014-15, Freeman High School), Jack Lembcke (2013-14, Roosevelt High School), Addison DeHaven (2012-13, Brookings High School), Tyler Schultz (2011-12, Custer High School), Tony Smoragiewicz (2010-11, Rapid City Central High School), Trevor Gebhart (2009-10, Washington High School), Alex Muntefering (2008-09, Parkston High School), and Matt Tetzlaff (2007-08 & 2006-07, T.F. Riggs High School) 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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