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**BILLINGS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MONTANA 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 Dawson LaRance of Billings Senior High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Montana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. LaRance is the fourth Gatorade Montana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Billings Senior 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 LaRance as Montana'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, LaRance 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 6-foot, 150-pound senior distance runner captured a pair of individual titles and shared in a third at the Class AA state meet this spring, leading the Broncs to a second-place finish as a team. LaRance won the 800-meter run with a time of 1:50.22 and the 1600 in 4:15.51 before anchoring the winning 4x400 relay medley quartet, breaking the tape in 3:18.01. LaRance also took silver in the 800 at the Arcadia Invitational with a time of 1:51.59. His 800 clocking at the state meet ranked as the nation's No. 6 performance among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection.

An accomplished and award-winning vocalist in his school's concert choir, he is a member of the National Honor Society and has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group. "Dawson LaRance is one of the hardest-working athletes I have ever met," said Billings Senior High head coach Brandon Quesenberry. "He is extremely dedicated on improving himself and those around him. He leads by example everything from the way he warms up, cools down, works with coaches and the way he competes. He is a great student, athlete, and young man anyone could meet."

LaRance has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic 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 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.

LaRance joins recent Gatorade Montana Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Jake Perrin (2015-16, Flathead High School), Dalton Daum (2014-15 & 2013-14, Butte High School), Matt Tokarz (2012-13, Flathead High School), Zach Perrin (2011-12, Flathead High School), Scotty Koehler-Owens (2010-11 & 2009-10, Billings Senior High School), Chris Wilson (2008-09, C.M. Russell High School), Josh Pelczar (2007-08, Billings West High School), and Brian Vallie (2006-07, Hardin High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Dawson 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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