

**ANCHORAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Tristian Merchant of Anchorage Christian School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Merchant is the first Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Anchorage Christian 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 Merchant as Alaska'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 July, Merchant joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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 5-foot-10, 145-pound junior won the 3000-meter run at the University of Washington High School Invitational with a time of 8:31.70 this past winter, which ranked as the nation's No. 5 prep performance indoors in 2020. The state's reigning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Merchant won the 1600 and 3200 at the Division 2 state championship meet outdoors in 2019, while also anchoring the victorious 4x400 relay quartet and the second-place 4x800 foursome.

Merchant has volunteered locally on behalf of Anchorage Rescue Mission and youth running programs. "Tristian is one of those athletes that comes along once in a coaching career," said Anchorage Christian coach Jason Hofacker. "He is consistent, dedicated, coachable, and has great integrity. He pushes all those around him to set their goals higher and work harder to attain them."

Merchant has maintained a 3.77 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Merchant joins recent Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Terrel Johnson (2018-19, West Valley High School), Jacob Moos (2017-18, Galena City Schools), Brandon Nicholson (2016-17, Colony High School), Brett Morman (2015-16, South Anchorage High School), and Levi Thomet (2014-15, 2013-14 and 2012-2013, Kodiak High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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