

**ENDERLIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 4, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Joe Hurlburt of Enderlin High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Hurlburt is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Enderlin 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 Hurlburt as North Dakota's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Hurlburt joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.), Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Jabari Parker (2011-12, Simeon Career Academy, Ill.) and Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.).

The 6-foot-10, 225-pound junior forward averaged 22.6 points, 14.3 rebounds, 4.9 assists, 1.5 blocks and 1.4 steals per game in leading the Eagles to an 18-4 season and a trip to the Class B - Region 1 semifinals. Also the 2020-21 MaxPreps North Dakota High School Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Hurlburt is a three-time All-Region 1 selection and a two-time Class B All-State honoree. Ranked as the nation's No. 80 prospect in the Class of 2022 by 247 Sports, Hurlburt enters his senior season as his school's career leader in points (1,607), rebounds (1,133), assists (259) and blocks (180).

Hurlburt has volunteered locally with Eagles Buddies, the town's youth basketball organization. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball official as well as on behalf of various school fundraisers. "With Joe, you want to soak it in and enjoy the talent you're watching, because you don't see a player like him around here," said Bryce Laxdahl, head coach at Northern Cass High. "He's the total package. He can handle the ball, pass the ball, score the ball. He's pretty unselfish, so he could score even more. He kind of runs that team."

Hurlburt has maintained a 3.5 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hurlburt joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Players of the Year Boden Skunberg (2019-20, Jamestown High School), Mason Walters (2018-19, Jamestown High School), Joe Pistorius (2017-18, West Fargo High School), and Aanen Moody (2016-17, Dickinson High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Hurlburt has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Hurlburt is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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