

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

**CHICAGO** (July 8, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Tristian Merchant of Anchorage Christian School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Merchant is the first Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Player 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 Player 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-9, 140-pound senior won three individual events at the Division 2 state meet this past season, leading the Lions to the state championship as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year in boys track and field, Merchant broke the state record in winning the 3200-meter run with a time of 8:52.53. He also captured the 800 in 1:59.04 and took the 1600 in 4:15.28. He was named Most Outstanding Athlete at the state championship meet.

Merchant has volunteered locally on behalf of Anchorage Rescue Mission and youth running programs. "An athlete of Tristian's caliber doesn't come along very often—he's a true generational talent," said Anchorage Christian coach Jake Moe. "His performance in the 3200-meter race at the Alaska State Championship shattered the previous state record, which was set in 1975 by Don Clary. It was the oldest state record on the books."

Merchant has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Northern Arizona University 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.

Two-time winner Merchant joins recent Gatorade Alaska Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Terrel Johnson (2018-19, West Valley High School), Jacob Moos (2017-18, Galena City School), and Brandon Nicholson (2016-17, Colony High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Merchant has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Merchant 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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