

**CASTEEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 **Dayton Carlson of Casteel High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Carlson is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Casteel 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 Carlson as Arizona'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, Carlson 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 state's 2020-21 Gatorade Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1, 135-pound senior swept the 800, 1,600- and 3,200-meter run events at the Division 2 state meet this past season, leading the Colts to the team title. At the time of his selection, Carlson ranked in the Top 40 nationally among 2021 prep competitors in the 800, 1600 and mile.

Carlson has volunteered locally with Feed My Starving Children and has donated his time as a youth track coach. "Dayton was by far the best distance runner in the state," said Chris Hanson, assistant coach of Desert Vista High. "His range from 400 meters to 3200 meters is not matched in any division."

Carlson has maintained a 3.74 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Arizona State 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.

Carlson joins recent Gatorade Arizona Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Leo Daschbach (2019-20 & 2018-19, Highland High School), Tyson Jones (2017-18, Desert Edge High School), and Turner Washington (2016-17, Canyon del Oro High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Carlson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Carlson 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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