

**SKYLINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (July 8, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Hobbs Kessler of Skyline High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Kessler is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Skyline 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 Kessler as Michigan'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, Kessler 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-11, 145-pound senior broke the national prep record in the 1500-meter run this past season with a scorching time of 3:34.6, the fourth-fastest time run by an American of any age in 2021. Kessler qualified for the US Olympic Trials in the event and reached the semifinal round. He also won the 800 at the Division 1 state meet in 1:54.13 and broke the tape in the 1600 with a time of 4:16.68. Kessler's personal-best of 8:39.04 was the fastest two-mile clocking in the nation—No. 4 in US prep history—while his time of 1:49.67 in the 800 ranked No. 3 in among prep competitors in 2021. During the indoor season, he set another national high school record when he ran a 3:57.66 in the mile.

Kessler is a leader and volunteer in the local climbing community, working with young athletes at Planet Rock as a volunteer assistant coach, teaching climbing techniques, setting routes, and organizing games and activities for the youth teams. In his neighborhood, Kessler serves as a de facto big brother to kids on the block and helper to their parents. In addition to his official babysitting duties, Hobbs often gives parents breaks by playing with the neighborhood kids and organizing races, games and activities to keep them occupied. "Hobbs is a once-in-a-generation talent," said Skyline coach Mike Lyall. "He has an amazing work ethic and an unparalleled drive to improve. It's been an absolute joy to watch him grow these past few years. I'm very excited to see how high he will rise."

Kessler, who attends Community High School, an alternative public school, has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Northern Arizona University this fall, but has signed a professional contract with adidas.

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.

Kessler joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Dylan Targgart (2019-20, Coldwater High School), Nick Foster (2018-19 & 2017-18, Pioneer High School), and Cole Johnson (2016-17, Rockford High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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