

**HILLSBORO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 **Kaden Pastian of Hillsboro High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Pastian is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Hillsboro 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 Pastian as North Dakota'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, Pastian 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 6-foot-3, 220-pound senior swept the shot put and discus events at the Class B state meet this past season, leading the Hillsboro-Central Valley co-op team to a third-place finish. Pastian set a meet record by launching the discus 192 feet even, winning by more than 20 feet. At the time of his selection, Pastian's personal-best discus mark of 193 feet, 4 inches ranked No. 12 nationally among 2021 prep competitors. His season-best shot put of 62-7 ranked No. 18 nationally.

Pastian has volunteered locally as a youth track coach. "It has been amazing to watch Kaden Pastian develop into the most dominant thrower that I've seen in North Dakota," said Jeremy Anderson, head coach of Thompson High. "I am so impressed with how Kaden was able to handle the mental part of competition. It was him against his own distances. Throwing is such a technical event and frustration can set in so easily. For him to do what he did this season is nothing short of amazing."

Pastian has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at North Dakota 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.

Pastian joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Calob Larson (2019-20 & 2018-19, Legacy High School), Levi Rockey (2017-18, Century High School), and Hunter Lucas (2016-17, Davies High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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