

**ANDOVER CENTRAL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Bryce Barkdull** of **Andover Central** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Barkdull is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Andover Central.

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 Barkdull as Kansas’ 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, Barkdull joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Nico Young (2019-20, Newbury Park High School, Calif.), Michael Norman (2015-16 & 2014-15, Vista Murrieta High School, Calif.), Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas).

The 6-foot, 165-pound junior won the Class 5A individual title in the pole vault this past season, clearing 17 feet, one inch to set a new meet record. At the mid-season Shawnee Mission North Relays, Barkdull cleared a career-best 17-6.25 to win the event and set a new state record. That mark ranked No. 2 nationally among prep boys in 2023. He set the state meet record by successfully negotiating over 17-1. He also won gold at Nike Outdoor Nationals this spring with a clearance of 16-11.5.

Barkdull has donated his time locally by serving on the Andover Central Athletics Advisory Leadership Committee. “Bryce Barkdull elevated himself into the national elite for pole vaulters this spring,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor at PrepCalTrack.com. “Bryce broke the meet record in winning the Kansas state title, then grabbed the gold medal at the Nike Outdoor Nationals meet. A remarkable campaign for a guy who still has another scholastic season to go.”

Barkdull has maintained a weighted 4.11 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Barkdull joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Casey Helm (2021-22, Madison High School), Tyus Wilson (2020-21, Sterling High School), Sam Hankins (2019-20, Manhattan High School), and Tim Lambert (2018-19, Smoky Valley High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade’s Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade’s social impact partners, supporting Gatorade’s ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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