

**FARGO NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 3, 2023) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Peder Haugo** of **Fargo North High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year**. Haugo is the first Gatorade North Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Fargo North High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Haugo as North Dakota's best high school football player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Emmitt Smith (1986-87, Escambia High School, Fla.), Peyton Manning (1993-94, Isidore Newman School, La.) and Jackson Arnold (2022-23, John H. Guyer High School, Texas).

The 6-foot-2, 210-pound senior running back and defensive back rushed for 1,512 yards and 26 touchdowns this past season, averaging 8.4 yards per carry and leading the Spartans (12-0) to the Class AA state title, the program's first in 23 years. Haugo also caught two passes for 89 yards and a score. On defense, the two-time First Team All-State selection recorded 53 tackles, broke up nine passes and had three interceptions, returning one for a touchdown. Ranked as the state's No. 3 recruit by 247Sports, he was named both the Class 2A Senior Football Athlete of the Year and the Midco Sports Senior Athlete of the Year.

A practiced piano and viola player, Haugo has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with the National Honor Society. He has also served as a youth leader at First Lutheran Church in Fargo and as a North High Student Ambassador. "Peder had a tremendous, record-setting season in leading the Spartans to a state title," said Jody Norstedt of the Midco Sports Network. "Whenever the team needed a spark, Haugo seemed able to rip off a long touchdown run. His combination of explosiveness and vision in the backfield make him so difficult to defend. What stood out to me most this season was his unwavering focus and humility. In postgame interviews, he was quick to deflect any praise to his teammates and, after touchdowns, he'd quickly hand the ball to the official and get back to either the sidelines or the huddle."

Haugo has maintained a weighted GPA of 3.74 in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Haugo joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Football Players of the Year Michael Rostberg (2022-23, Shanley High School), Lucas Schweigert (2021-22, Century High School), Andrew Leingang (2020-21, Century High School), and Oscar Benson (2019-20, Hillsboro-Central Valley), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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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