

**FARGO NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 26, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Owen Sondag** of **Fargo North High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Sondag is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country 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 Sondag as North Dakota’s best high school boys cross country 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 Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11 & 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School, Ill.) and Edward Cheserek (2012-13, St. Benedict’s Preparatory School, N.J.).

The 6-foot-1, 147-pound senior won the Class A state meet this past season with a time of 15:52.2, breaking the tape 6.6 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Spartans to a seventh-place finish as a team. Sondag won six of the eight races he entered, including the ND/MN/SD/Canada Border Battle. He finished 89th at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships.

Sondag is a member of the North High Knowledge Bowl team that won the state title in 2023. He has volunteered locally as a mentor to young runners throughout the city. “Owen has reflected the epitome of a dedicated and committed distance runner,” said Gary Mailloux, head coach of North High School. “He is goal-driven, puts together a progressive and precise plan to achieve and will commit whatever is within his means to achieve it.”

Sondag has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom and scored a perfect 36 on the ACT. He has made a commitment to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he will compete for the cross country and track teams, beginning 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.

Sondag joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Brady Korsmo (2022-23, Bismarck High School), Aiden Johnson (2021-22, Sheyenne High School), Sean Korsmo (2020-21, Bismarck High School) and Brady Yoder (2019-20 & 2018-19, Dickinson High School), 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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