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**LA SALLE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced D.J. Principe of La Salle Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Principe is the fifth Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the track, distinguishes Principe as Rhode Island's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Principe joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, 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.).

A three-time Gatorade State Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-11, 140-pound senior won the 800-meter run, the 1,500-meter run and the 3,000-meter run at the state meet this past season, leading the Rams to a third-place finish as a team. Principe's top time in the 3000 of 8:16.60 is a state record and ranked as the nation's No. 1 clocking among prep competitors this spring at the time of his selection. He also set a state record in the mile with a time of 4:00.73, which ranked No. 4 in the nation. His best mark in the 1500 of 3:54.70 ranked No. 13.

Principe has volunteered locally on behalf of his church as part of food drives for the needy and he has donated his time as a mentor to prospective La Salle students. "D.J. Principe is not only Rhode Island's best track athlete this year, he is also the greatest track athlete ever to come out of Rhode Island," said Jim Doyle, head coach of Bishop Hendricken High.

Principe has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Stanford University 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Principe joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Bobby Colantonio (2015-16, Barrington High School), Jack Salisbury (2014-15, La Salle Academy), Adam Kelly (2013-14, Barrington High School), Charlie Ionata (2012-13, Barrington High School), Joe Velez (2011-12, Classical High School), Jarell Forbes (2010-11, Classical High School), Kadeem Kushimo (2009-10, La Salle Academy), Andrew Springer (2008-09 & 2007-08, Westerly High School), and Tom Webb (2006-07, Bishop Hendricken High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, D.J. will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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