

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**BEARDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 Josh Sobota of Bearden High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Sobota is the first Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Bearden 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 track, distinguishes Sobota as Tennessee'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, Sobota 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.).

The 6-foot-4, 230-pound senior won the shot put and discus at the Class AAA state meet this past season, leading the Bulldogs to a sixth-place finish as a team. Sobota took bronze in the shot at this month's New Balance Nationals Outdoors with an effort of 65 feet, 11.75 inches, which ranked as nation's No. 13 performance among prep competitors this spring at the time of his selection. Sobota also finished sixth in the discus at NBNO. His personal-best discus throw of 190-3 set a state-meet record and ranked No. 38 in the nation this season.

An accomplished bass player, Sobota is a member of the Knoxville Youth Symphony Orchestra. The president of his school's Key Club, he has volunteered locally at the East Tennessee Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House. "Josh seems to be the classic success story, combining gifted ability with passion and determination," said Don Madgett, head coach of South Doyle High. "This is the kind of kid coaches love."

Sobota has maintained a 4.35 weighted GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Sobota joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year George Patrick (2015-16 & 2014-15, Brentwood Academy), Harrison Williams (2013-14, Memphis University School), Brock Baker (2012-13 & 2011-12, Oakland High School), Tyler Anderson (2010-11, Hillsboro High School), Kevin Lazas (2009-10, Brentwood High School), Jordan Chaney (2008-09, Maryville High School), Sean Keveren (2007-08, Brentwood High School), and Rob Sorrell (2006-07, Bolton High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Josh 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.