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**AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Asa Martin of Austin High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year. Martin is the first Gatorade Alabama Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Austin 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 field, distinguishes Martin as Alabama's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Martin joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mitchell Trubisky (2012-13, Mentor High School, Ohio), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills High School, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga High School, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2014-15 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School, La.).

The 6-foot, 195-pound senior running back rushed for 2,228 yards and 33 touchdowns this past season, leading the Black Bears (12-1) to the Class 6A state quarterfinals. Martin also caught two TD passes and threw for one score. Martin, who attended IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla. as a junior, was an All-State selection for Austin as a sophomore. In two years with the Black Bears, he rushed for 4,355 yards and 53 touchdowns.

A member of his local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered as an elementary school teacher's aide and he has donated his time at a nursing home. "Asa is a big physical back," said Wade Waldrop, head coach of James Clemens High. "He catches the ball well and can run inside and outside."

Martin has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Auburn University in the fall of 2018.

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.

Martin joins recent Gatorade Alabama Football Players of the Year Jaylond Adams (2016-17, Minor High School), Ty Pigrome (2015-16, Clay-Chalkville High School), Kerryon Johnson (2014-15, Madison Academy), Racean 'Roc' Thomas (2013-14, Oxford High School), Nick Mullens (2012-13, Spain Park High School), Jameis Winston (2011-12, Hueytown High School), Jamal Golden (2010-11, Wetumpka High School), and Coty Blanchard (2009-10, Cherokee County High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Martin 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.