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**MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 JT Daniels of Mater Dei High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade California Football Player of the Year. Daniels is the third Gatorade California Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Mater Dei 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 Daniels as California'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, Daniels 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1, 205-pound junior quarterback had led the Monarchs to a 14-0 record and a berth in the State Open Division championship game against De La Salle High at the time of his selection. Ranked as the nation's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2019 by Rivals.com, Daniels completed 242-of-335 passes for 3,890 yards and 49 touchdowns against just four interceptions through 14 games. He also rushed for 513 yards and seven scores on 57 carries. Entering the final game of his junior year, Daniels has passed for 11,781 yards and 149 touchdowns in his prep football career.

Daniels has volunteered as part of Mater Dei's Monarchs for Marines program supporting the troops and families of the First Marine Division stationed at nearby Camp Pendleton. He has also donated his time locally delivering care backpacks to the homeless and as a youth football coach. "JT Daniels has been an absolute beast this year," said Pat Harlow, head coach of JSerra Catholic High. "I have not seen a player look so calm and collected in a long time. He has taken his game to another level this year. I have been very impressed with his play overall."

Daniels has maintained a weighted 4.18 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Southern California in the fall of 2019.

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.

Two-time winner Daniels joins Gatorade California Football Players of the Year Sean McGrew (2015-16, St. John Bosco High School), Jake Browning (2014-15 & 2013-14, Folsom High School), Su'a Cravens (2012-13, Vista Murrieta High School), Zach Kline (2011-12, San Ramon Valley High School), Cody Kessler (2010-11, Centennial High School), and Malcolm Jones (2009-10, Oaks Christian School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Daniels 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/>.

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