

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**LAUSANNE COLLEGIATE SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TENNESSEE BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Eric Gray of Lausanne Collegiate School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year. Gray is the first Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Lausanne Collegiate 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 Gray as Tennessee'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, Gray 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 5-foot-10, 190-pound junior running back rushed for 3,151 yards and 45 touchdowns on 323 carries this past season, leading the Lynx to a 13-0 record and the Division II-AA state championship. The state's two-time Mr. Football winner, Gray also caught 11 passes for 268 yards and three touchdowns. Also the MVP of the state championship game each of the last two years, he was a First Team All-State selection and the Commercial Appeal Offensive Player of the Year as a sophomore.

Gray has volunteered as a student ambassador for his school and is a member of his school's Lynx Live broadcast journalism club. "Eric Gray is the real deal," said Bill Whittemore, head coach at Franklin Road Academy. "He's one heck of an explosive running back. His vision and agility make him one of the best that I've seen. He seems to wear teams down and dominate in the second half. I don't believe we ever brought him down without multiple hats on him."

Gray has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school next 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.

Gray joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Football Players of the Year JaCoby Stevens (2016-17, Oakland High School), Dillon Mitchell (2015-16, White Station High School), Ke'Shawn Vaughn (2014-15, Pearl-Cohn High School), Todd Kelly Jr. (2013-14, Webb School of Knoxville), Mark Dodson (2012-13, Whitehaven High School), Patton Robinette (2011-12, Maryville High School), I'Tavius Mathers (2010-11, Blackman High School), and JaRon Toney (2009-10, Alcoa High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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