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**RYAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Spencer Sanders of Ryan High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year. Sanders is the second Gatorade Texas Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Ryan 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 Sanders as Texas' best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Sanders 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-2, 195-pound senior quarterback had led the Raiders to a 13-0 record and a berth in the Class 5A Division I quarterfinals at the time of his selection. Sanders completed 209 of 313 passes for 3,319 yards and 47 touchdowns, with just six interceptions, through 13 games. He also rushed for 1,037 yards and 11 touchdowns on 127 carries entering the postseason round of eight. A First Team All-State selection and a two-time District MVP, Sanders is ranked as the nation's No. 7 dual-threat quarterback recruit in the Class of 2018 by ESPN.

Sanders has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and an elementary school literacy initiative. "Spencer Sanders is just a special player, there's no other way to describe him," said Billy Miller, head coach at Denton High. "He throws the ball better than just about anyone I've ever been around, and you can't tackle him when he runs it. He also shows great leadership, great knowledge of the game ... every intangible you can think of."

Sanders has maintained a 3.04 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Oklahoma State 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.

Sanders joins recent Gatorade Texas Football Players of the Year Shawn Robinson (2016-17, DeSoto High School), Tren'Davian Dickson (2015-16, Navasota High School), Kyler Murray (2014-15 & 2013-14, Allen High School), Kenny Hill (2012-13, Southlake Carroll High School), Johnathan Gray (2011-12 & 2010-11, Aledo High School), and Scotty Young (2009-10, Billy Ryan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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