

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**C.D. HYLTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Ricky Slade of C.D. Hylton High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Virginia Football Player of the Year. Slade is the first Gatorade Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from C.D. Hylton 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 Slade as Virginia'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, Slade 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-9, 185-pound senior running back rushed for 1,978 yards and 30 touchdowns on 179 carries this past season, leading the Bulldogs to a 9-4 record and the Class 6A quarterfinals. Slade also caught 22 passes for 283 yards and five touchdowns. He is an All-State and Washington Post All-Met honoree and has been selected to play in the 2018 Under Armour All-America Game. He is ranked as the nation's No. 18 recruit in the Class of 2018 by ESPN.

Slade has volunteered as a peer mentor in his school. "Slade is a great competitor with a great motor," said Daniel Bruton, head coach at Forest Park High. "He's a real playmaker with the ball in his hands—he can make all 11 defenders miss. He's strong and he's one of the fastest players on the field wherever he goes. He's really fun to watch, but not as much fun to coach against."

Slade has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Penn 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.

Slade joins recent Gatorade Virginia Football Players of the Year Lamont Atkins (2016-17, Lake Braddock High School), Wayne Davis (2015-16, Lake Taylor High School), Noah Reimers (2014-15, Tuscarora High School), Andrew Brown (2013-14, Oscar Smith High School), Jonathan Allen (2012-13, Stone Bridge High School), Alex Carter (2011-12, Briar Woods High School), Demetrious Nicholson (2010-11, Bayside High School), and Phillip Sims (2009-10, Oscar Smith High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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