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**MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MARYLAND BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Jalen Smith of Mount Saint Joseph High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Smith was the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Saint Joseph High School when he won the award for his 2016-17 season.

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 Smith as Maryland's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Smith joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph HS, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot-10, 195-pound senior forward led the Gaels to a 30-6 record and the Baltimore Catholic League title game. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Smith averaged 22.2 points, 12 rebounds and four blocks per game while shooting 62 percent from the field. A McDonald's All-American and ranked as the nation's No. 15 recruit in the Class of 2018 by ESPN, Smith is a two-time Baltimore Catholic League Player of the Year.

Smith has volunteered locally as an elementary school tutor and as a mentor for students with special needs. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball coach. "Jalen Smith should be the Gatorade Player of the Year," said Hakim Hibbert, head coach at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School. "He is the most dominant player in our league."

Smith has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Maryland this 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.

Two-time winner Smith joins Gatorade Maryland Boys Basketball Players of the Isaiah Miles (2015-16, Gwynn Park High School), Justin Robinson (2014-15, Saint James School), Allonzo Trier (2013-14, Montrose Christian School), Marquis Wright (2012-13, North Point High School), Justin Anderson (2011-12, Montrose Christian School), Marcus Thornton (2010-11, Bishop McNamara High School), Josh Hairston (2009-10, Montrose Christian School), Christian Webster (2008-09, Landon School), Sean Mosley (2007-08, St. Frances Academy), and Malcolm Delaney (2006-07, Towson Catholic) among the state's list of former award winners.

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