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**WHITFIELD SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® MISSOURI BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Torrence Watson of Whitfield School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Watson is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Whitfield 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 Watson as Missouri'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, Watson 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-4, 175-pound senior guard led the Warriors to a 21-8 season and a trip to the Class 3 state quarterfinals. A year after leading the St. Louis metro area in scoring, Watson repeated the feat, averaging 31 points along with 6.7 rebounds and 2.8 assists per game. A four-time Class 3 All-State honoree, he eclipsed 2,500 points for his high school career, finishing with 2,755.

Watson keeps busy away from the competitive arena as an active parishioner at the Peoples Community Christian Church and as an instructor at the Whitfield Summer Basketball Camp in addition to donating his time to charitable initiatives such as the No One Hungry Thanksgiving program. "I'm glad he's graduating—let's start with that," said Darron Lowe, head coach at Lutheran North High. "What he's done on offense and defense has been instrumental to their success. Absolutely, he gets my vote. When I look at Gatorade Player of the Year, it's on the court and off the court as well. And he's become that complete student-athlete."

Watson has maintained a 3.06 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Missouri 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.

Watson joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jared Ridder (2016-17, Kickapoo High School), Jayson Tatum (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Chaminade College Preparatory School), Kyle Wolf (2012-13, Rockhurst High School), Cameron Biedscheid (2011-12, Cardinal Ritter College Prep. High School), Bradley Beal (2010-11 & 2009-10, Chaminade College Preparatory School), Alec Burks (2008-09, Grandview High School), Kramer Soderberg (2007-08, Saint Charles West High School), and Conner Teahan (2006-07, Rockhurst) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Torrence 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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