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**JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® OREGON 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 Kamaka Hepa of Jefferson High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Hepa is the fifth Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jefferson 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 Hepa as Oregon'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, Hepa 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, 225-pound senior forward had led the Democrats to a 23-3 record and a berth in the Class 6A quarterfinals at the time of his selection. A two-time Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year in Alaska, Hepa averaged 16.6 points, 10.4 rebounds, 6.3 blocks and 3.5 assists through 26 games. A two-time All-Conference honoree, he was the Iolani Classic Most Outstanding Player and was selected to the USA TODAY's ALL-USA Oregon First Team.

Hepa has served in his school's student leadership and has volunteered locally on behalf of Self Enhancement, Inc. "Kamaka Hepa is a great player on both ends of the floor," said Dondrale Campbell, head coach at Cleveland High. "He's really active in the post, he's a good passer and he has a nice touch from the outside. He can defend any position on the court and he blocks shots really well."

Hepa has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Hepa joins recent Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Players of the Year Zach Reichle (2016-17, Wilsonville High School), Payton Pritchard (2015-16 & 2014-15, West Linn High School), Silas Melson (2013-14, Jefferson High School), Calvin Hermanson (2012-13 & 2011-12,, Lake Oswego High School), Kyle Wiltjer (2010-11, Jesuit High School), Garrett Jackson (2009-10, Westview), E. J. Singler (2008-09, South Medford High School), Brad Tinsley (2007-08, Oregon City High School), and Kevin Love (2006-07, Lake Oswego) among the state's list of former award winners.

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