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**PORTER-GAUD STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Aaron Nesmith of Porter-Gaud as its 2017-18 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Nesmith is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Porter-Gaud.

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 Nesmith as South Carolina'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, Nesmith 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-6, 190-pound senior guard led the Cyclones to a 25-2 season, culminating with a third straight South Carolina Independent School Association Class 3A state title. Nesmith averaged 21 points per game along with 4.5 rebounds and 1.8 assists. Having accumulated 2,067 career points, he was named Most Outstanding Player at both the Chick-fil-A Classic and the Rotary Roundball holiday tournament. He is also a three-time SCISA 3A Player of the Year.

A member of his school's Global Union club, Nesmith has volunteered locally by raising awareness of the importance of diversity. "I've seen all of the great players in our state, and Aaron, in my opinion, is the complete package," said Anthony Houston, head coach at Northwood Academy. "He's a stud player on the court while continuing to display actions of selflessness for his teammates to follow. As an opposing coach, I'm happy I won't face him anymore."

Nesmith has maintained a 3.45 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University 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.

Nesmith joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jalek Felton (2016-17, Gray Collegiate Academy), Joseph Battle (2015-16, Abbeville High School), P.J. Dozier (2014-15, Spring Valley High School), Seventh Woods (2013-14, Hammond School), Justin McKie (2012-13, Irmo High School), Brice Johnson (2011-12 & 2010-11, Edisto High School), RJ Slawson (2009-10, Fort Dorchester High School), Milton Jennings (2008-09 & 2007-08, Pinewood Preparatory School), and Trevor Deloach (2006-07, Saluda High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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