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**HUNTINGTON-ST. JOSEPH PREP STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Jaemyn Brakefield of Huntington St. Joseph Prep as its 2017-18 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Brakefield is the second Gatorade West Virginia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Huntington St. Joseph Prep.

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 Brakefield as West Virginia'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, Brakefield 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-9, 205-pound sophomore forward had led the Irish to a 24-6 record at the time of his selection. Brakefield averaged 19.7 points, 7.2 rebounds and 3.3 assists through 30 games. He was named to the All-Tournament teams at the Marshall County Hoopfest, the Bojangles Bash, the ARS Hoopfest in both Tampa and Memphis, and the FCA Bristol Hoopfest. He is ranked as the nation's No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2020 by ESPN.

Brakefield has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and Ronald McDonald House Charities. "I think Jaemyn Brakefield is going to be a superstar," said Mark Taylor, head coach at St. Benedict's Prep. "He's long, he's athletic, he shoots the ball really well, he can get to the rim and he can defend multiple positions. He's a matchup problem wherever you put him on the floor."

Brakefield has maintained a 3.25 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior year of high school 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.

Brakefield joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Luke Frampton (2016-17, Poca High School), Chase Harler (2015-16 & 2014-15, Wheeling Central Catholic High School), Montaque Gill-Caesar (2013-14, Huntington St. Joseph Prep.), Andrew Wiggins (2012-13 & 2011-12, Huntington St. Joseph Prep.), Chase Fischer (2010-11, Ripley High School), Noah Cottrill (2009-10, Logan High School), Aaron Dobson (2008-09, South Charleston High School), Bryant Irwin (2007-08, Bridgeport Senior High School), and Patrick Patterson (2006-07, Huntington High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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