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PINNACLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® ARIZONA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 15, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Nico Mannion of Pinnacle High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Mannion is the second Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pinnacle 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 Mannion as Arizona'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, Mannion joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln High School, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood High School, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington High School, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-3, 180-pound senior guard led the Pioneers to a 27-3 record and their second consecutive Class 6A state championship this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Mannion averaged 30.4 points, 6.2 rebounds, 6.2 assists and 2.8 steals per game. The Desert Valley Player of the Year, he was named to the All-Arizona First Team and selected to play in the McDonald's All-American Game. Mannion is also a Third Team Naismith All-American and is ranked as the nation's No. 8 recruit in the Class of 2019 by ESPN.

A volunteer coach at local youth basketball clinics, Mannion has donated his time to Out of the Darkness Walks for mental health awareness and suicide prevention. "Nico Mannion has no weaknesses at the high school level," said Dan Peterson, head coach at Chaparral High. "He's great in transition, he has amazing handles and he can score from anywhere."

Mannion has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Arizona 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 Mannion joins Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Players of the Year Alex Barcello (2016-17 & 2014-15, Corona del Sol High School) and Mitch Lightfoot (2015-16, Gilbert Christian High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Mannion also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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