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## **BLUE VALLEY NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® KANSAS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 15, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Christian Braun of Blue Valley Northwest High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Braun is the third Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Blue Valley Northwest 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 Braun as Kansas' 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, Braun 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-7, 190-pound senior guard led the Huskies to a 27-2 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Braun averaged 27.8 points, 9.3 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 1.8 steals per game, including 16 points and 10 rebounds in the title-game win over Washburn Rural High. Braun, who was 5-foot-8 as a freshman, was the MVP of the state tournament and is a two-time First Team All-State selection. He concluded his prep basketball career with 1,074 points.

Braun has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach. "Christian is hands down the best player in Kansas," said Ryan Phifer, head coach of Blue Valley North High School. "He was a tough matchup because he can go inside and out. He is tough to stop in transition and helped make his teammates better."

Braun has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Kansas University beginning 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.

Braun joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jeremiah Robinson-Earl (2017-18, Bishop Miege High School), Mitchell Ballock (2016-17, Eudora High School), Jerrick Harding (2015-16, Wichita Southeast High School), and Dean Wade (2014-15, St. John High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Braun 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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