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**MILILANI HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® HAWAII FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 3, 2015) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Vavae Malepeai of Mililani High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Hawaii Football Player of the Year. Malepeai is the second Gatorade Hawaii Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Mililani 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 Malepeai as Hawaii's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Malepeai joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Wes Welker (1999-00, Heritage Hall HS, Okla.), Terrell Suggs (1999-00, Hamilton HS, Ariz.), Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 6-foot, 195-pound senior running back rushed for 1,952 yards and 29 touchdowns on 234 carries this past season, leading the Trojans (10-3) to the Division I semifinals. The 2015 Oahu Interscholastic Association Blue Offensive Player of the Year, Malepeai set a state record for career rushing yards with 4,556. He has been selected to play in the 2016 U.S. Army All-American Bowl and is a finalist for the U.S. Army Player of the Year award.

Malepeai has maintained a 3.52 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and as a youth football coach.

"Vavae Malepeai is a tremendous talent," said Amosa Amosa, head coach at Campbell High. "I have had the pleasure to watch him grow and mature into an awesome player. He is especially a great humble young man when I've seen him in public or at family functions."

Malepeai has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Oregon in the fall of 2016.

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Malepeai joins recent Gatorade Hawaii Football Players of the Year McKenzie Milton (2014-15, Mililani High School), Larry Tuileta (2013-14 & 2012-13, Punahou School), Steven Lakalaka (2011-12, Punahou School), Marcus Mariota (2010-11, Saint Louis High School), Andrew Manley (2009-10, Leilehua High School), and Manti Te'o (2008-09 & 2007-08, Punahou School) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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