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**DAMASCUS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MARYLAND FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 3, 2015) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jake Funk of Damascus High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Maryland Football Player of the Year. Funk is the first Gatorade Maryland Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Damascus 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 Funk as Maryland's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Funk 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 5-foot-11, 205-pound senior running back has led the Hornets to a perfect 13-0 record and a berth in the Class 3A state championship game against Dundalk, scheduled for Dec. 3. Funk rushed for 2,289 yards and 44 touchdowns on 183 carries through 13 games, breaking the state single-season record for touchdowns with 50 overall. He was a First Team All-State selection as a junior and was named to the Washington Post All-Met Second Team.

Funk has maintained a 4.46 GPA in the classroom. He has assisted special needs students in his school and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs.

"Funk is a complete player," said Ernie Williams, head coach at Wheaton High. "A great mix of speed and strength make him virtually unstoppable out of the backfield, and on the other side of the ball he's just as effective."

Funk has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Funk joins recent Gatorade Maryland Football Players of the Year Dwayne Haskins (2014-15, Bullis School), Taiwan Deal (2013-14, DeMatha Catholic High School), Kendall Fuller (2012-13, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School), Cyrus Jones (2011-12, Gilman School), Darius Jennings (2010-11, Gilman School), Zach Zwinak (2009-10, Linganore High School) and Jelani Jenkins (2008-09 & 2007-08, Our Lady of Good Counsel High 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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