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Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3556)

**EAST LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Chazz Surratt of East Lincoln High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade North Carolina Football Player of the Year. Surratt is the first Gatorade North Carolina Football Player of the Year to be chosen from East Lincoln 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 Surratt as North Carolina's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Surratt 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, Pahoekoe HS, Fla.) and Jerome Bettis (1989-90, Mackenzie HS, Mich.).

The 6-foot-3, 215-pound senior quarterback led the Mustangs to a 14-0 record and a berth in the Class 2AA state semifinals, scheduled for Dec. 4. Surratt dislocated his throwing elbow (left) in the third round of the state playoffs, however, and will undergo season-ending surgery. After sustaining the injury, he returned to the field in the state quarterfinals and completed all five of his passes—right-handed—to surpass two-time Gatorade North Carolina Football Player of the Year Chris Leak's career record of 16,590 total yards. His 229 total touchdowns also set a career state record. The returning North Carolina High School Athletic Association Athlete of the Year, Surratt threw for 3,546 yards and 48 touchdowns against just five interceptions on 209-of-290 passing (72.1 percent) in his final prep season. He also rushed for 1,342 yards and 15 scores on 134 carries in 2015.

A basketball standout as well, Surratt has maintained a 4.75 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of a literacy-outreach program in addition to participating in multiple fundraising campaigns for an area elementary school and East Lincoln's athletic department.

"I've coached against him in six football games over the past four years, and he is by far the best player I've ever coached against," said Trent Lowman, head coach at rival Bandys. "Not only that, but he carries himself with high character and dignity and is a true example of how an athlete is supposed to act on and off the field. Not only have I coached against Chazz, but I've also attended several of his practices during the playoffs over the past four years. His preparation and work ethic are just as impressive as his stats."

Surratt has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Surratt joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Football Players of the Year Josh Ladowski (2014-15, Lake Norman High School), Will Grier (2013-14 & 2012-13, Davidson Day School), Keith Marshall (2011-12, Millbrook High School), Stephone Anthony (2010-11, Anson High School), Christian LeMay (2009-10, Butler High School), Xavier Nixon (2008-09, Jack Britt High School) and Braden Hanson (2007-08, Charlotte Latin 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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