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**POINT PLEASANT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Cody Mitchell of Point Pleasant High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year. Mitchell is the first Gatorade West Virginia Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Point Pleasant 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 Mitchell as West Virginia's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award announced in December, Mitchell 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-3, 230-pound senior running back rushed for 2,321 yards and 43 touchdowns on 178 carries this past season, leading the Knights (12-1) to the Class AAA semifinals. A 2014 First Team All-State selection, Mitchell also amassed 101 tackles and 5.5 sacks for a defense that yielded just 11.7 points per game.

Mitchell has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the 4-H Club, the Mason County Fair and as a youth football and basketball coach.

"I think Cody Mitchell is the best player in the state of West Virginia," said Brian Thomas, head coach at Musselman High. "He has size and strength and is very difficult to bring down once he gets going. I have seen a lot of players this season and I think Mitchell is easily at the top."

Mitchell has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Marshall University 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.

Mitchell joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Football Players of the Year Kentre Grier (2014-15, South Charleston High School), Chazzy Thomas (2013-14, Morgantown High School), Ryan Switzer (2012-13 & 2011-12, George Washington High School), Keion Wright (2010-11, Capital High School), Allan Wasonga (2009-10, Parkersburg High School), Aaron Slusher (2008-09, South Charleston High School) and Josh Jenkins (2007-08, Parkersburg 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.

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