

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**GILBERT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 17, 2016) — 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 Mitch Lightfoot of Gilbert Christian High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Lightfoot is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gilbert Christian 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 court, distinguishes Lightfoot as Arizona's 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, Lightfoot joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-9, 220-pound senior forward averaged 22.5 points and 11.7 rebounds per game while shooting 65 percent from inside the arc this past season, leading the Knights (21-6) to the second round of the Division II state tournament. A 2015 First Team All-State selection, Lightfoot scored at least 20 points in 18 games this season, including a 30-point effort in a 73-45 win over Seton Catholic in the Division II Section VI semifinal.

Lightfoot has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. An avid fisherman, he has volunteered locally on behalf of an assisted living facility and as a mentor for students at an elementary charter school.

"I have known Mitch Lightfoot since his middle school days and am definitely a fan of his, except when he plays against us," said Catalina Foothills High head coach Doug D'Amore. "We saw a lot of great teams but no player was as valuable and talented as him. I believe what separates him from all the other candidates is his character and academic focus that makes him a complete student-athlete."

Lightfoot has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Kansas 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 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.

Lightfoot joins recent Gatorade Arizona Boys Basketball Players of the Year Alex Barcello (2014-15, Corona del Sol High School), Dorian Pickens (2013-14, Pinnacle High School), Casey Benson (2012-13, Corona del Sol High School), Tim Derksen (2011-12, Amphitheater High School), Jordan Baker (2010-11, Tempe High School), Corey Hawkins (2009-10 & 2008-09, Estrella Foothills High School), Taylor Rohde (2007-08, Pinnacle High School), and Jerryd Bayless (2006-07, St. Mary's 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.

###