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**HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® IDAHO 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 Connor Harding of Highland High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Harding is the second Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Highland 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 Harding as Idaho'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, Harding 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-5, 190-pound senior forward led the Rams to a 19-6 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. A 2015 First Team All-State selection, Harding averaged 18.5 points and six rebounds per game while shooting nearly 60 percent from inside the arc. During his 14-point effort that sparked a 65-55 win over Madison in the state final he hit 11-of-12 free throw attempts.

Harding has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group and as a youth basketball coach. He has also collected and donated goods for area families in need.

"Connor Harding's understanding of the game is at a very high level," said Highland High head coach Chris Frost. "The time that he puts in on and off the court helps him be a great student-athlete. His fundamentals of the game of basketball are unbelievable. He puts the team first.

Harding has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Brigham Young University 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.

Harding joins recent Gatorade Idaho Boys Basketball Players of the Year Stefan Gonzalez (2014-15, Highland High School), Isaiah Wright (2013-14 & 2012-13, Borah High School), Joey Nebeker (2011-12, Melba High School), Kyle Dranginis (2010-11 & 2009-10, Skyview High School), Josh Fuller (2008-09, Madison High School), Mitch Bruneel (2007-08, Eagle High School), and Matt Ballenger (2006-07, Skyview 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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