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**WICHITA SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Jerrick Harding of Wichita Southeast High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Harding is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wichita Southeast 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 Kansas'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, 180-pound senior guard averaged 27.8 points, 4.6 rebounds, 1.7 steals and 1.5 assists per game this past season, leading the Golden Buffaloes (20-5) to the Class 6A state championship game. A returning Class 6A Honorable Mention All-State selection as named by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association, Harding shot 54.3 percent from the field, 43.9 percent from 3-point range and 83.9 percent from the free-throw line. His 103 points in three state tournament games set a Class 6A postseason scoring record.

Harding has maintained a 3.32 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the YMCA.

"As a freshman, Jerrick stood out above the rest, even the upperclassmen," said Wichita Southeast head coach Melvin Herring. "Jerrick's (basketball) IQ and playing style for the game early on got him on varsity as a starter, and he continued that throughout his high school career, as he scored more than 1,600 points to become one of the top scorers in the history of the city league. Jerrick's scoring ability and skill level bring spectators to see the show. His character and respect for not only the game of basketball, but whomever he encounters, has been above what any coach or program would love their kids to display."

Harding remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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 Kansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Dean Wade (2014-15, St. John High School), Clay Custer (2013-14, Blue Valley Northwest High School), Semi Ojeleye (2012-13, Ottawa High School), Perry Ellis (2011-12, 2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, Wichita Heights High School), Travis Releford (2007-08, Bishop Miege High School), and Tyrel Reed (2006-07, Burlington 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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