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**SCOTLANDVILLE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® LOUISIANA 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 Ja'Vonte Smart of Scotlandville Magnet High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Smart is the first Gatorade Louisiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Scotlandville Magnet 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 Smart as Louisiana'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, Smart 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-4, 190-pound sophomore point guard averaged 22.7 points, 5.8 rebounds, 5.5 assists, 2.0 steals and 1.2 blocks per game this past season, leading the Hornets (34-3) to the Class 5A state title game. A returning Class 5A First Team All-State selection as named by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association, Smart shot 49.3 percent from the field, 44.5 from 3-point range and 80.6 percent from the free-throw line as a sophomore. He led Scotlandville to the 2015 Class 5A state championship as a freshman, capturing MVP honors in the state final. A member of the 2015-16 USA Basketball Men's Junior National Team, he averaged 6.8 points and 4.2 rebounds during the U16 National Team's run to the 2015 FIBA Americas U16 Championship.

Smart has maintained a 3.10 GPA in the classroom. In addition to participating as a member of his school's engineering club, he has donated his time as a mentor to youth basketball players in the area.

"Ja'Vonte has a knowledge of and for the game unlike any other high school player," said Scotlandville head coach Carlos Sample. "He is a very unselfish player. He looks to get his teammates involved before he attacks. He's a fearless and awesome competitor with a high basketball IQ."

Smart will begin his junior year of high school 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.

Smart joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Boys Basketball Players of the Year Wayde Sims (2014-15, University Laboratory School), Trey Touchet (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Thomas More High School), Ricardo Gathers (2011-12 & 2010-11, Riverside Academy), Matt Derenbecker (2009-10 & 2008-09, Metairie Park Country Day School), and Greg Monroe (2007-08 & 2006-07, Helen Cox 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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