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**OMAHA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Aguek Arop of Omaha South High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Arop is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Omaha South 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 Arop as Nebraska'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, Arop 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-6, 190-pound junior forward led the Packers to a 28-1 record and the Class A state championship this past season. Arop collected 12 points, 11 rebounds and two steals in the 59-50, title-clinching win over Fremont, capturing All-Tournament honors. He averaged 15.9 points, 7.8 rebounds, 2.5 assists, 1.8 steals and 1.1 blocks per game. Arop shot 61.8 percent from the field. He missed the majority of his sophomore season due to a broken tibia.

Arop has maintained an A average in the classroom. Also an accomplished pianist, he has volunteered on behalf of his church in addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor and peer tutor.

"He is a premier player in our state," said Ben Ries, head coach at rival Norfolk High. "He overcame the challenge of a serious leg injury to help his team to the No. 1 seed in our state tournament. He is athletic, versatile and unselfish. I have appreciated watching his calm, confident demeanor during intense game action."

Arop has verbally committed to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska in the fall of 2017.

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.

Arop joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Players of the Year Tyler Hagedorn (2014-15, Norfolk High School), Mitchell Hahn (2013-14, Fremont High School), Josiah Gustafson (2012-13, Millard North High School), Mike Gesell (2011-12 & 2010-11, South Sioux City High School), Elliott Eliason (2009-10 & 2008-09, Chadron High School), and Wes Eikmeier (2007-08 & 2006-07, Archbishop Bergan Catholic 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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