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**LIMA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Xavier Simpson of Lima Senior High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Simpson is the second Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lima Senior 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 Simpson as Ohio'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, Simpson 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, 175-pound senior point guard has led the Spartans to a 28-0 record and a berth in the Division I semifinals, scheduled for March 18. Simpson is averaging 28 points, 6.3 assists and 3.7 steals per game through 28 games, shooting nearly 60 percent from 3-point range. A First Team All-State selection and an Ohio Mr. Basketball award finalist, he scored 59 points in a 103-57 win over Fremont Ross last month. Simpson is rated the nation's No. 45 recruit in the Class of 2016 by ESPN.

Simpson has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. A youth mentor as part of his school's Big Spartans Little Spartans program, he also serves as treasurer of Lima Senior's chapter of DECA in addition to producing and anchoring a weekly sports video broadcast called "Around the Spartan."

"I can't believe that there is a player in Ohio that is more important to his team's success than Xavier Simpson," said Jim Rucki, head coach at Findlay High. He makes everyone around him a better player. He is true point guard. He keeps his team under control and is a coach on the floor. He can be a great scorer when he needs to be, but has an uncanny ability to give his teammates the ball right where they need it. He is the best player in Ohio."

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

Simpson joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Players of the Year Luke Kennard (2014-15 & 2013-14, Franklin High School), Jack Gibbs (2012-13, Westerville North High School), Adolphus Washington (2011-12, Taft High School), Travis Trice (2010-11, Wayne High School), Jordan Sibert (2009-10, Princeton High School), C.J. McCollum (2008-09, GlenOak High School), B.J. Mullens (2007-08, Canal Winchester High School), and Jon Diebler (2006-07, Upper Sandusky 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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