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**WEST LINN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OREGON 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 Payton Pritchard of West Linn High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Pritchard is the first Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Linn 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 Pritchard as Oregon'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, Pritchard 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 state's returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Pritchard led the Lions to a 26-3 record and a fourth consecutive Class 6A state championship this past season. The 6-foot-2, 180-pound senior point guard collected 25 points, 12 rebounds, six assists and three steals in the 74-48, title-clinching victory against South Medford, capturing All-Tournament honors. The two-time returning Class 6A Player of the Year as named by The Oregonian, Pritchard averaged 23.6 points, 6.7 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 3.0 steals per game in his final prep season. He shot 56.5 percent from the field, 43.1 percent from 3-point range and 77.0 percent from the free-throw line. A member of the 2016 USA Junior National Select Team, he also participated in the 2015 FIBA 3x3 U18 World Championship this past summer.

Pritchard has maintained a 3.57 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has also participated in an exchange program during each of the past three summers, mentoring players from Lugo, Spain, in an English-immersion and basketball skills clinic.

"He is a fierce competitor and leaves it all on the floor," said Craig Evans, head coach at rival Canby High. "I am most impressed by him off the floor. His character and respect to his competitors are second to none."

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

Two-time winner Pritchard joins Gatorade Oregon Boys Basketball Players of the Year Silas Melson (2013-14, Jefferson High School), Calvin Hermanson (2012-13 & 2011-12, Lake Oswego High School), Kyle Wiltjer (2010-11, Jesuit High School), Garrett Jackson (2009-10, Westview High School), E. J. Singler (2008-09, South Medford High School), Brad Tinsley (2007-08, Oregon City High School), and Kevin Love (2006-07, Lake Oswego 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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