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**ABBEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Joseph Battle of Abbeville High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Battle is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Abbeville 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 Battle as South Carolina'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, Battle 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-3, 185-pound senior guard led the Panthers to a 20-4 record and the Class 2A state title this past season. The 2016 South Carolina Basketball Coaches Association Class 2A Player of the Year, Battle averaged 31 points and 6.9 rebounds per game, shooting 69 percent from inside the arc. He scored a game-high 32 points in Abbeville's 58-55 win over Timberland in the state title-clincher.

Battle has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. A devoted parishioner in his church community and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered locally as a child care assistant and youth basketball coach.

"Joseph Battle is one of the finest young men I've ever been around," said John Scruggs, head coach at Ninety-Six High. "He is a great player and even a better person. He works hard, plays with class and always competes at a high level."

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

Battle joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Basketball Players of the Year P.J. Dozier (2014-15, Spring Valley High School), Seventh Woods (2013-14, Hammond School), Justin McKie (2012-13, Irmo High School), Brice Johnson (2011-12 & 2010-11, Edisto High School), RJ Slawson (2009-10, Fort Dorchester High School), Milton Jennings (2008-09 & 2007-08, Pinewood Preparatory School), and Trevor Deloach (2006-07, Saluda 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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