

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**ST. ALOYSIUS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 24, 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 DeMichael Harris of St. Aloysius High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Harris is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from St. Aloysius 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 track, distinguishes Harris as Mississippi's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Harris joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Meb Keflezighi (1993-94, San Diego HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.) and Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.).

The 5-foot-9, 170-pound senior won a trio individual state titles at the Class 3A Mississippi Association of Independent Schools meet this past season, setting meet records in all three disciplines. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Harris won the 100-meter dash in 10.55 seconds, the 200-meter dash in 20.87 and the 400-meter dash in 47.96. He also took fourth in the 200 at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor (20.95), while his qualifying heat time of 20.88 at NBNO ranked as the nation's No. 9 clocking among prep competitors in 2016 at the time of his selection.

Harris has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Key Club and the National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Good Shepherd Community Center.

"DeMichael is a great kid with amazing character," said Saint Aloysius coach Michael Fields. "He's just a gem to coach, and I think he's a better person than he is an athlete."

Harris has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in football and track and field on scholarship at Hinds Community College 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 Harris joins Gatorade Mississippi Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Terrell Smith (2013-14, Vicksburg High School), Evan Osborne (2012-13, Pearl High School), Justin Fondren (2011-12, Oxford High School), Sam Kendrick (2010-11, Oxford High School), Marcus Jackson (2009-10, J.Z. George High School), Willie Calvin (2008-09, Greenville-Weston High School), Morris Kersh (2007-08, Pearl High School), and Martin Lee (2006-07, Greenville-Weston 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.

###