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**HIGLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 12, 2016) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Draycen Hall of Higley High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year. Hall is the first Gatorade Arizona Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Higley 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 field, distinguishes Hall as Arizona's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Collins joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Anquan Boldin (1998-99, Pahokee HS, Fla.), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills HS, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park HS, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga HS, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2012-13, 2014-15, St. Augustine HS, La.)

The 5-foot-8, 160-pound junior running back and kick returner rushed for 2,298 yards and 29 touchdowns this past season, leading the Knights (11-2) to the Division 4A state semifinals. Hall caught 43 passes for 641 yards and six scores and also returned five kickoffs and one punt for TDs. A First Team All-Region receiver and returner as a sophomore, Hall averaged 8.6 yards per carry, 13.2 yards per punt return, 14.9 yards per reception and 41.6 yards per kickoff return to finish the year with 3,908 all-purpose yards and 41 touchdowns.

Hall has maintained a weighted 4.13 GPA in the classroom. The Gilbert Town Council Citizen of the Month in September, he has volunteered locally with the Boy Scouts of America and has donated his time to Feed My Starving Children and on behalf of a home for people with disabilities.

"Draycen Hall is a stud," said Jake Barro, head coach of Casa Grande High. "He is blowing away the other running backs in Arizona. When we played Higley, I thought Draycen was the difference-maker."

Hall will begin his senior year of high school next 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Hall joins recent Gatorade Arizona Football Players of the Year Daniel Bridge-Gadd (2015-16, Paradise Valley High School), Christian Kirk (2014-15, Saguaro High School), Luke Rubenzer (2013-14, Saguaro High School), Jalen Brown (2012-13, Mountain Pointe High School), Davonte Neal (2011-12 & 2010-11, Chaparral High School), and Brett Hundley (2009-10, Chandler High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hall will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).