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**MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 12, 2016) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced JT Daniels of Mater Dei High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade California Football Player of the Year. Daniels is the third Gatorade California Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Mater Dei 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 Daniels as California'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 6-foot-1, 195-pound sophomore quarterback passed for 4,849 yards and 67 touchdowns this past season, leading the Monarchs (13-1) to the Southern Section Division I championship game. Daniels completed 315-of-423 passes (74.5 percent) and tossed at least five touchdowns in 11 of 14 games. The 2015 MaxPreps State Freshman of the Year, he concluded his sophomore year with 7,891 yards and 100 touchdowns through the air in his prep career.

Daniels has maintained a weighted 4.14 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally delivering care backpacks to the homeless, and he has donated his time to his school's Monarchs for Marines program, providing support and encouragement for Marines and their families living at nearby Camp Pendleton.

"JT is the most accomplished sophomore quarterback I've ever seen," said Chuck Petersen, head coach of Orange Lutheran High. "He has been unbelievable this year. He is extremely accurate, distributes the ball where it needs to go and makes great decisions."

Daniels will begin his junior 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.

Daniels joins recent Gatorade California Football Players of the Year Sean McGrew (2015-16, St. John Bosco High School), Jake Browning (2014-15 & 2013-14, Folsom High School), Su'a Cravens (2012-13, Vista Murrieta High School), Zach Kline (2011-12, San Ramon Valley High School), Cody Kessler (2010-11, Centennial High School), and Malcolm Jones (2009-10, Oaks Christian School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Daniels 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.