

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Nolan Henderson of Smyrna High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Delaware Football Player of the Year. Henderson is the first Gatorade Delaware Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Smyrna 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 Henderson as Delaware'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, 175-pound senior quarterback passed for 2,331 yards and 32 touchdowns this past season, leading the Eagles to a perfect 12-0 record and their second consecutive Division I state championship. Henderson completed 123 of 200 passes and was intercepted just five times. He was a First Team All-State selection as a junior and was named to the 2015 USA TODAY's ALL-USA Delaware First Team.

Henderson has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and an elementary school reading initiative.

"Nolan Henderson is just a great player," said Mark Quillin, head coach at Sussex Tech. "He's got great command of their offense. He can make plays with his feet or his arm and he has the ability to hit receivers that are covered."

Henderson has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Delaware in the fall of 2017.

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.

Henderson joins recent Gatorade Delaware Football Players of the Year Colby Reeder (2015-16, Salesianum School), Taronn Selby (2014-15, St. Georges Technical High School), Darius Wade (2013-14, Middletown High School), Chris Godwin (2012-13, Middletown High School), Jamie Jarmon (2011-12, Indian River High School), Ryan Kilpatrick (2010-11, Salesianum School), and C. J. Jones (2009-10, A.I. du Pont) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Henderson 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.