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**LANDRY-WALKER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Keytaon Thompson of Landry-Walker High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Football Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade Louisiana Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Landry-Walker 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 Thompson as Louisiana'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.)

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-5, 225-pound senior quarterback had led the Chargers to a 12-2 record and a berth in the Class 5A state championship game. Thompson completed 182-of-304 passes for 3,521 yards and 40 touchdowns against just five interceptions through 14 games. He had also rushed for 1,264 yards and 24 scores. The District 8-5A Most Valuable Player, he entered the state final with 10,280 yards of total offense and 144 touchdowns in his prep football career.

Thompson has maintained a 3.12 GPA in the classroom. An avid chess player, he has volunteered locally as a mentor to fellow students and as a youth football and basketball coach.

"Keytaon's elusiveness and ability to escape would-be tacklers is second to none," said Al Jones, head coach of St. Augustine High. "Game-planning for him was an absolute nightmare."

Thompson has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Mississippi State University 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.

Thompson joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Football Players of the Year Lindsey Scott (2015-16, Zachary High School), Deshawn Capers-Smith (2014-15, Warren Easton Charter High School), Leonard Fournette (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School), Landon Collins (2011-12, Dutchtown High School), Anthony Johnson (2010-11, O. Perry Walker High School), and Kenny Hilliard (2009-10, Patterson) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Thompson 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.