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**THORNTON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MAINE 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 Mike Laverriere of Thornton Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maine Football Player of the Year. Laverriere is the third Gatorade Maine Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Thornton Academy.

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 Laverriere as Maine'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, 220-pound senior quarterback and safety rushed for 1,237 yards and 17 touchdowns on 135 carries this past season, leading the Trojans (7-2) to the Class A South Region semifinals. A first-year starter at QB, Laverriere also passed for 803 yards and six scores. Twice a First Team All-Conference selection, he recorded 61 tackles on defense, including three for losses, and three interceptions.

Laverriere has maintained a weighted 3.49 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research and as a youth football, basketball and baseball coach.

"Mike Laverriere ran that entire offense and always gave them a spark when they needed it," said Jason Jackson, head coach of Deering High. "Defensively, he's also their QB at safety. He has a nose for the ball and seems to always be in the play."

Laverriere remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Laverriere joins recent Gatorade Maine Football Players of the Year Joe Esposito (2015-16, Portland High School), Joe Fitzpatrick (2014-15, Cheverus High School), Ben Lucas (2013-14, Cony High School), Andrew Libby (2012-13, Thornton Academy), Louis DiTomasso (2011-12, Wells High School), Peter Gwilym (2010-11, Cheverus High School), and Jack Mallis (2009-10, Windham High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Laverriere 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.