

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**CASS TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Donovan Peoples-Jones of Cass Technical High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year. Peoples-Jones is the first Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Cass Technical 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 Peoples-Jones as Michigan'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-2, 192-pound senior wide receiver caught 60 passes for 1,071 yards and 17 touchdowns this past season, leading the Technicians to a 14-0 record and the Division 1 state title. Peoples-Jones averaged 17.8 yards per reception and also intercepted four passes on defense. The Associated Press Division 1-2 Player of the Year, he was also selected to play in the 2017 U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Peoples-Jones has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels, youth football camps and a food bank.

"Donovan Peoples-Jones is a great football player," said John Powell, head coach at Dearborn High. He's fast, strong and he has good size. He's the best player we've played against all year."

Peoples-Jones 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.

Peoples-Jones joins recent Gatorade Michigan Football Players of the Year Tony Poljan (2015-16, Lansing Catholic High School), Alex Malzone (2014-15, Brother Rice High School), Travis Smith (2013-14, Ithaca High School), Mark Chapman (2012-13, Port Huron High School), Cooper Rush (2011-12, Lansing Catholic High School), Valdez Showers (2010-11, Madison High School), and Jason Fracassa (2009-10, Stevenson High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Peoples-Jones 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.