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**CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 12, 2016) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Cam Akers of Clinton High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Mississippi Football Player of the Year. Akers is the second Gatorade Mississippi Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Clinton 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 Akers as Mississippi'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 5-foot-11, 212-pound senior quarterback led the Arrows to a 14-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Akers passed for 3,101 yards and 31 touchdowns and he rushed for 2,094 yards and 34 scores. In the state title game, Akers contributed 445 yards of offense and seven TDs in a 49-35 win over Pearl High. A U.S. Army All-American and a finalist for the Maxwell Football Club's National High School Player of the Year award, he concluded his prep football career with 13,205 yards of total offense and 149 touchdowns.

Akers has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a mentor to elementary-school students and as a youth football coach.

"Cam is special," said Josh Morgan, head coach of Warren Central High. "He's a winner who is poised in crunch time. His stats speak for themselves, but his intangibles are just as good. He always finds a way to prevail."

Akers 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.

Akers joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Football Players of the Year Jack Abraham (2015-16, Oxford High School), Darrell Henderson (2014-15, South Panola High School), Devin Voorhies (2013-14, Wilkinson County High School), Ashton Shumpert (2012-13, Itawamba Agricultural High School), Anthony Alford (2011-12 & 2010-11, Petal High School), and Dylan Favre (2009-10, St. Stanislaus College) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Akers 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).