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**FORT DORCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Dakereon Joyner of Fort Dorchester High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year. Joyner is the first Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Fort Dorchester 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 Joyner as South Carolina'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-2, 197-pound junior quarterback had led the Patriots to a 12-1 record and a berth in the Class AAAAA state semifinals. Joyner completed 178-of-277 passes for 3,389 yards and 42 touchdowns against just six interceptions through 13 games. He had also rushed for 915 yards and 11 scores on 141 carries. A First Team All-State selection as a sophomore, Joyner led Fort Dorchester to the 2015 state title.

Joyner has maintained a 3.16 GPA in the classroom. A mentor to elementary-school students, he has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and at a center for senior citizens.

"Dakereon makes the offense go for them," said Bobby Marion, head coach of West Ashley High. "He is an explosive player who makes highlight-type plays and keeps plays alive. He is the main reason for their success."

Joyner will begin his senior year of high school next fall.

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.

Joyner joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Football Players of the Year Austin Scott (2015-16, Spartanburg High School), J.J. Arcega-Whiteside (2014-15, Dorman High School), Shuler Bentley (2013-14 & 2012-13, James F. Byrnes High School), Quinshad Davis (2011-12, Gaffney High School), Justin Worley (2010-11, Northwestern High School), and Marcus Lattimore (2009-10, Byrnes High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Joyner 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.