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**MITCHELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Spencer Neugebauer of Mitchell High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year. Neugebauer is the first Gatorade South Dakota Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Mitchell 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 Neugebauer as South Dakota'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, 190-pound senior running back and linebacker rushed for 2,191 yards on 217 carries and scored an 11-man football state-record 42 touchdowns this past season, leading the Kernels to an 11-1 record and the Class 11AA state championship. Neugebauer also contributed 64 tackles and five interceptions on defense. Captain of the Argus Leader Elite 45 team, he is also a two-time First Team All-State honoree.

Neugebauer has maintained a 3.61 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a nursing home and Habitat for Humanity.

"Neugebauer was easily the most explosive athlete we played all season," said Chad McCarty, head coach at Spearfish High. "He's got great patience and the ability to explode when the hole opens up. Defensively, he's fast, with great instincts."

Neugebauer 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.

Neugebauer joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Football Players of the Year Matt Farniok (2015-16, Washington High School), Luke Loudenburg (2014-15, Howard High School), Caden Quintanilla (2013-14, Lincoln High School), Cole Langer (2012-13, Dell Rapids High School), Alex Schultz (2011-12, Lincoln High School), Matt Hermanson (2010-11, Washington High School), and Austin Sumner (2009-10, Brandon Valley High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Neugebauer 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.