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**OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 JaCoby Stevens of Oakland High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year. Stevens is the first Gatorade Tennessee Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Oakland 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 Stevens as Tennessee'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, 200-pound senior defensive back and wide receiver intercepted nine passes and made 64 tackles this past season, leading the Patriots to a 14-1 record and the Class 6A state final. Stevens also caught 38 passes for 690 yards and 12 touchdowns. The Class 6A Mr. Football Back, he has been selected to play in the 2017 Under Armour All-America Game.

Stevens has maintained a 3.0 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and an elementary school reading initiative.

"JaCoby Stevens is as good as anyone I've ever seen come through here," said Greg Wyant, head coach at Siegel High. "He's got great ball skills, he can leap out of the gym and you can't go out there and out-physical him. If there's a more explosive player, one more vital to his team, I'd sure like to see him."

Stevens has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Louisiana State University in the fall of 2017.

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.

Stevens joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Football Players of the Year Dillon Mitchell (2015-16, White Station High School), Ke'Shawn Vaughn (2014-15, Pearl-Cohn High School), Todd Kelly Jr. (2013-14, Webb School of Knoxville), Mark Dodson (2012-13, Whitehaven High School), Patton Robinette (2011-12, Maryville High School), I'Tavius Mathers (2010-11, Blackman High School), and JaRon Toney (2009-10, Alcoa High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Stevens 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.