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**GATORADE® NATIONAL BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
R.J. BARRETT**

Celtics' Forward and Former Gatorade Male Athlete of the Year Jayson Tatum Surprises Winner with Honor

Orlando, Fla. (March 15, 2018) – In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced R.J. Barrett of Montverde Academy (Orlando, Fla.) as its 2017-18 Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum surprised Barrett with the news at dinner.

"I still remember the day when I was honored as the Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year and winning the award is one of the most memorable moments in my career," said Tatum. "It's such a rare accomplishment, so I was honored to be able to be a part of today's celebration by surprising R.J. with the award."

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Barrett as the nation's best high school boys basketball player. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select him from 550,000 high school boys basketball players nationwide. Barrett is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 6-foot-7, 200-pound senior guard has led the Eagles to a 32-0 record and the No. 1 spot in the USA Today Super 25 Expert Rankings. Barrett has averaged 28.7 points, 8.5 rebounds, 4.5 assists, two blocks and 1.5 steals a game for the Eagles, who will play in the GEICO High School Basketball Nationals quarterfinals, scheduled for March 29. A McDonald's All-American, Naismith Trophy winner, and the No. 1 prospect in the country according to the ESPN 100, Barrett starred last summer for Canada's U19 team and led that squad to its first FIBA World Championship medal.

Barrett has volunteered locally with the Montverde Lower School Basketball Buddies program, the St. Jude's Children's Hospital and on behalf of the South Lake Church of Christ in Clermont, Fla.

"R.J. is an attacking player off the dribble who finishes or draws contact with great effectiveness," says Paul Biancardi of ESPN Basketball. "But what makes him special is his influence on the outcome of games even when his shot isn't falling. That's what makes him ESPN's No. 1-ranked recruit. He's made tremendous improvement with his ball skills over the course of his high school career, and his jumper is now a legitimate threat from the perimeter. He brings a high level of intensity along with a wide range of versatility to every contest, and he brings a mature and business-like approach to the game because winning is always top of mind. Simply put, he's a program-changer."

Barrett has maintained a 3.14 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Duke University this fall.

"Without question, R.J. is deserving of recognition as the nation's best high school boys basketball player based on his statistics on the court and the impact his accomplishments have had on Montverde's success," said Gatorade Senior Vice President and General Manager Brett O'Brien. "He is also a shining example to peers and aspiring young athletes of what a leader and a student-athlete should be. He represents everything we hope for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient."

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Barrett also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for his organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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 high sports leadership team in partnership with 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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- 2015 NBA first overall pick Karl-Anthony Towns
- Three-time WNBA champion Maya Moore
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at

PlayeroftheYear.Gatorade.com on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

YEAR	NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	STATUS
2017-18	R.J. Barrett	Montverde Academy, Orlando, FL	High School Senior
2016-17	Michael Porter Jr.	Nathan Hale, Seattle, WA	Univ. of Missouri
2015-16	Jayson Tatum	Chaminade College Prep, St. Louis, MO	Boston Celtics
2014-15	Ben Simmons	Montverde Academy, Orlando, FL	Philadelphia 76ers
2013-14	Karl-Anthony Towns	St. Joseph, Metuchen, NJ	Minnesota T-Wolves
2012-13	Andrew Wiggins	St. Joseph's Central Catholic, Huntington, WV	Minnesota T-Wolves
2011-12	Jabari Parker	Simeon Career Academy, Chicago, IL	Milwaukee Bucks
2010-11	Bradley Beal	Chaminade College Prep, St. Louis, MO	Washington Wizards
2009-10	Brandon Knight	Pine Crest School, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Phoenix Suns
2008-09	Brandon Knight	Pine Crest School, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Phoenix Suns
2007-08	Jrue Holiday	Campbell Hall, North Hollywood, CA	New Orleans Pelicans
2006-07	Kevin Love	Lake Oswego, Lake Oswego, OR	Cleveland Cavaliers
2005-06	Greg Oden	Lawrence North, Indianapolis, IN	Retired Pro
2004-05	Greg Oden	Lawrence North, Indianapolis, IN	Retired Pro
2003-04	Dwight Howard	SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Atlanta, GA	Charlotte Hornets
2002-03	LeBron James	St. Vincent-St. Mary, Akron, OH	Cleveland Cavaliers
2001-02	LeBron James	St. Vincent-St. Mary, Akron, OH	Cleveland Cavaliers
2000-01	Kelvin Torbert	Northwestern Edison, Flint, MI	Retired Pro
1999-00	Jared Jeffries	North, Bloomington, IN	Denver Nuggets Staff
1998-99	LaVell Blanchard	Pioneer, Ann Arbor, MI	Retired Pro
1997-98	Al Harrington	St. Patrick, Elizabeth, NJ	Retired Pro
1996-97	Baron Davis	Crossroads, Santa Monica, CA	Retired Pro
1995-96	Kobe Bryant	Lower Merion, Ardmore, PA	Retired Pro
1994-95	Stephon Marbury	Abraham Lincoln, Brooklyn, NY	Beijing Ducks
1993-94	Felipe Lopez	Rice, New York, NY	Retired from NBA
1992-93	Randy Livingston	Isidore Newman School, New Orleans, LA	Retired from NBA
1991-92	Corliss Williamson	Russellville, Russellville, AR	Orlando Magic Staff
1990-91	Chris Webber	Detroit Country Day, Birmingham, MI	Retired from NBA
1989-90	Damon Bailey	Bedford North Lawrence, Bedford, IN	Butler Women's Staff
1988-89	Kenny Anderson	Archbishop Molloy, Jamaica, NY	Retired from NBA
1987-88	Alonzo Mourning	Indian River, Chesapeake, VA	Retired from NBA
1986-87	LaBradford Smith	Bay City, Bay City, TX	Retired from NBA
1985-86	J.R. Reid	Kempsville, Virginia Beach, VA	Patrick Henry Staff

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