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**MARET SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Luka Garza of Maret School as its 2016-17 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Garza is the first Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Maret 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 court, distinguishes Garza as District of Columbia's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Garza joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph HS, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot-11, 230-pound senior power forward and center averaged 24.6 points, 11.7 rebounds, 2.5 blocks and 1.1 assists this past season, leading the Frogs (26-5) to both the Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference and DCSAA tournament championship games. Garza averaged 33.3 points and 16.0 rebounds in the DCSAA tournament and dropped 37 points and 17 rebounds in a 77-66 loss to Gonzaga College High in the title game. He is a McDonald's All-American Game nominee and rated as the nation's No. 100 recruit in the Class of 2017 by ESPN.com.

A viola player in the school band, Garza has volunteered locally as a youth tutor and basketball camp counselor. "Luka is a very skilled forward that was able to score in a variety of ways this season," said Kevin Jones, head coach of St. Andrew's Episcopal School. "He scored around the basket and on the perimeter. Luka has great skills and hands for a 6-11 post player."

Garza has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Iowa beginning this 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.

Garza joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Chris Lykes (2015-16, Gonzaga College High School), Bryant Crawford (2014-15, Gonzaga College High School), Johnnie Shuler (2013-14, Roosevelt High School), Kris Jenkins (2012-13 & 2011-12, Gonzaga College High School), Nate Britt (2010-11, Gonzaga College High School), Tyler Thornton (2009-10, Gonzaga College), Ian Hummer (2008-09, Gonzaga College High School), Max Kenyi (2007-08, Gonzaga College High School), and Chris Wright (2006-07, St. John's College) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Luka 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 us on Twitter. 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).

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