

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**THE FIRST ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® FLORIDA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Chaundee Brown of The First Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Brown is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from The First Academy.

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 Brown as Florida'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, Brown 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-5, 205-pound senior guard and forward averaged 24.7 points, 6.7 rebounds and 2.4 assists per game while shooting 65.5 percent from inside the arc this past season, leading the Royals (26-2) to the Class 4A regional final. A First Team All-State selection, Brown is ranked as the nation's No. 31 recruit in the Class of 2017 by ESPN.

Brown has volunteered locally serving meals to families in need and as a youth basketball coach. "Chaundee Brown has been outstanding all four years of his high school career," said Matt Ruta, head coach at Orangewood Christian School. "His ability to shoot, score in the half-court, score in transition, involve his teammates and defend is elite. Not only is he a great player, but he also carries himself with a great deal of character and respect. He always plays hard and is very sportsmanlike in his conduct on the floor."

Brown has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Wake Forest University 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.

Brown joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Players of the Year Tony Bradley (2015-16, Bartow High School), Ben Simmons (2014-15, Montverde Academy), Joel Berry (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Lake Highland Preparatory School), Austin Rivers (2010-11, Winter Park High School), Brandon Knight (2009-10 & 2008-09, Pine Crest School), Ray Shipman (2007-08, Monsignor Pace High School), and Nick Calathes (2006-07, Lake Howell High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Chaundee 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.