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**GREAT FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA 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 Brendan Howard of Great Falls High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Montana Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Howard is the third Gatorade Montana Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Great Falls 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 court, distinguishes Howard as Montana'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, Howard 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-6, 210-pound senior forward led the Bison to a 16-7 record and the semifinals of the Class AA state tournament this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Basketball Player of the Year, Howard averaged 24.1 points, 10.5 rebounds and 1.7 steals per game. A three-time First Team All-State selection, he was also named the USA TODAY's ALL-USA Montana Player of the Year as a junior.

A mentor for younger students, Howard has volunteered locally on behalf of a food pantry, the Salvation Army and youth sports programs. "Brendan Howard is such a relentless, hard-working and skilled basketball player," said Drew Haws, head coach at Billings Senior High. "He is just a handful to deal with as an opposing coach."

Howard has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Eastern Washington 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.

Two-time winner Howard joins Gatorade Montana Boys Basketball Players of the Tres Tinkle (2014-15 & 2013-14, Hellgate High School), Daine Muller (2012-13, Skyview High School), Danny Robison (2011-12, Billings West High School), Tanner Roderick (2010-11, Bozeman High School), Josh Huestis (2009-10 & 2008-09, C.M. Russell High School), Andy Garland (2007-08, Sentinel High School), and Derek Selvig (2006-07, Dawson County High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Brendan 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.