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**WESTERVILLE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Kaleb Wesson of Westerville South High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Wesson is the second Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Westerville South 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 Wesson as Ohio'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, Wesson 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-7, 270-pound senior center averaged 22 points, 12 rebounds and three assists per game while shooting 70.3 percent from inside the arc this past season, leading the Wildcats (19-6) to the Division I district semifinals. A First Team All-State selection and a member of the 2015-16 USA Basketball Men's Junior National Team, Wesson is ranked as the nation's No. 75 recruit in the Class of 2017 by 247Sports.

An accomplished vocalist in his school's performance choir and a member of the student council, Wesson has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and as a youth basketball coach. "Kaleb Wesson is an outstanding example of everything that is right with high school athletics," said Shannon Trusley, head coach at Westerville North. "He leads on and off the floor and makes a difference for his team and school. He is the best high school basketball player in the state of Ohio this season and has a team-first approach when playing."

Wesson has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at The Ohio State 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.

Wesson joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Basketball Players of the Year Xavier Simpson (2015-16, Lima Senior High School), Luke Kennard (2014-15 & 2013-14, Franklin High School), Jack Gibbs (2012-13, Westerville North High School), Adolphus Washington (2011-12, Taft High School), Travis Trice (2010-11, Wayne High School), Jordan Sibert (2009-10, Princeton High School), C.J. McCollum (2008-09, GlenOak High School), B.J. Mullens (2007-08, Canal Winchester High School), and Jon Diebler (2006-07, Upper Sandusky High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kaleb 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.

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