

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**ST. ANDREW'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Cole Swider of St. Andrew's School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Swider is the sixth Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Andrew's 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 Swider as Rhode Island'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, Swider 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-8, 215-pound junior forward averaged 26.5 points, 11.2 rebounds, 3.1 assists, 1.9 steals and 1.3 blocks per game this past season, leading the Saints (20-9) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class AA Tournament semifinals. A NEPSAC Class AA First Team selection, Swider is a two-time Team MVP. He concluded his junior year with 1,962 points in his prep basketball career.

Swider has volunteered locally serving meals at a soup kitchen and as a peer tutor, and he has donated his time as a youth basketball coach and counselor. "Cole is a tremendous player," said Marcus O'Neil, head coach of Tilton (N.H.) School. "He is an outstanding shooter, makes plays driving to the hoop and can post up as well. He has a lot of potential."

Swider has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Swider joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Basketball Players of the Year Justin Mazzulla (2015-16, Bishop Hendricken High School), Corey Daugherty (2014-15, Barrington High School), Bonzie Colson (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Andrew's School), Jarell Lawson (2011-12, Central High School), Michael Carter-Williams (2010-11 & 2009-10, St. Andrew's School), Jay Jeannotte (2008-09, Narragansett High School), Ashton Watkins (2007-08, Classical High School), and Rakim Sanders (2006-07, St. Andrew's School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Cole 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.