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**NATHAN HALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® WASHINGTON 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 **Michael Porter Jr. of Nathan Hale High School** as its **2016-17 Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Porter Jr. is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Nathan Hale 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 Porter Jr. as Washington'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, Porter Jr. 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-9, 225-pound senior forward and guard led the Raiders to a 29-0 record, a No. 1 ranking in USA TODAY's Super 25 and the Class 3A state championship this past season. Porter Jr. averaged 36.2 points, 13.6 rebounds, 5.0 assists, 3.2 steals and 2.7 blocks per game. A member of the USA Basketball Men's U18 National Team, he has been chosen to play in the McDonald's All-American Game, the Jordan Brand Classic and the Nike Hoop Summit. Porter Jr. is ranked as the nation's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2017 by ESPN and is a finalist for the Naismith High School Boys Player of the Year award. The MVP of the Class 3A state tournament, he was also named Mr. Basketball by the Washington Interscholastic Basketball Coaches Association.

Porter Jr. has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's youth ministry and youth basketball programs. "Michael Porter is the best high school player I've ever seen or played against," said Brent Merritt, head coach at Eastside Catholic High. "There's nothing that he can't do on a basketball court. He can post you up and punish you, but if you put a big man on him he'll just go outside and keep moving back, to 28, 29 feet. He's the first high school player I've ever seen who is basically un-guardable."

Porter Jr. has maintained an A average in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Porter Jr. joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Basketball Players of the Year Isiah Brown (2015-16, Lakeside School), Dejounte Murray (2014-15, Rainier Beach High School), Jason Todd (2013-14 & 2012-13, Jackson High School), Jordan Chatman (2011-12, Union High School), Gary Bell Jr. (2010-11, Kentridge High School), Joe Harris (2009-10, Chelan High School), Peyton Siva (2008-09, Franklin High School), Abdul Gaddy (2007-08, Bellarmine Prep. School), and Jamelle McMillan (2006-07, O'Dea High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Michael 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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