

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**LA CROSSE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® WISCONSIN 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 Kobe King of La Crosse Central High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Player of the Year. King is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from La Crosse Central 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 King as Wisconsin'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, King 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-4, 190-pound senior guard had led the Red Raiders to a 24-2 record and a berth in the Division 2 state semifinals at the time of his selection. King averaged 26.4 points, 9.0 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 2.1 steals through 26 games. A First Team All-State honoree and the Mississippi Valley Conference Player of the Year, he was also named to USA TODAY's ALL-USA Wisconsin First Team.

King has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army, the La Crosse Jaycees Toys for Tots program, food donation drives and youth basketball teams. "Kobe King is just an outstanding basketball player, with great skills and athleticism," said Brad Reinhart, head coach at Aquinas High. "He's been by far the best player on the floor in every game I've seen him play."

King has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Wisconsin 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.

King joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Basketball Players of the Year Sam Hauser (2015-16, Stevens Point Area Senior High School), Henry Ellenson (2014-15, Rice Lake High School), Kevon Looney (2013-14, Hamilton High School), Luke Fischer (2012-13, Germantown High School), Sam Dekker (2011-12, Sheboygan Lutheran High School), Paul Jespersion (2010-11, Merrill High School), Josh Gasser (2009-10, Port Washington High School), Ben Averkamp (2008-09, Germantown High School), Kwamain Mitchell (2007-08, Dominican High School), and Tim Jarmusz (2006-07, Oshkosh West High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kobe 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.