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**DUNN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE CALIFORNIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 12, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Rodney Michael of Dunn School as its 2016-17 Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year. Michael is the second Gatorade California Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Dunn 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 field, distinguishes Michael as California's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Michael joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-8, 145-pound senior forward led the Earwigs to a 13-1-1 record and the Southern Section Division 6 tournament championship this past season. Michael scored 22 goals and passed for 14 assists, tallying seven goals in Dunn's five-game run to the sectional title. The CIF Division 6 Player of the Year, Michael scored the game-winning goal in the sectional title game in both 2015 and 2017. He concluded his prep soccer career with 74 goals and 43 assists.

A native of Sierra Leone in West Africa, Michael has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research. He has also donated his time distributing goods to the homeless and to the Craig Bellamy Foundation, which runs a soccer academy in Sierra Leone. "Rodney was literally quicker on the ball than my defenders were off the ball," said Sam Mahtani, head coach of Maranatha High School. "I've never seen someone move so quickly with such change of speed and direction. He was impossible to defend."

Michael has maintained a weighted 3.81 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of California, Santa Barbara beginning 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.

Michael joins recent Gatorade California Boys Soccer Players of the Year Elliot Smith-Hastie (2015-16, Loyola High School), Corban Anderson (2014-15, Granite Bay High School), Abu Danladi (2013-14, Dunn School), Cristian Roldan (2012-13, El Rancho High School), Ema Boateng (2011-12, Cate School), Seth Casiple (2010-11, Rocklin High School), Reed Williams (2009-10, Corona del Mar High School), Adam Jahn (2008-09 & 2007-08, Jesuit High School), and Jalil Anibaba (2006-07, Davis Senior High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rodney 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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