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**LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis of Lafayette High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Duplantis is the third Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lafayette 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 track, distinguishes Duplantis as Louisiana's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Duplantis joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-11, 147-pound junior continued to redefine the pole vault event this season, both in the high school realm and beyond. With a clearance of 19 feet, 4.25 inches at the Texas Relays this spring, he shattered the national high school record by nearly a foot. The jump also set a World Junior (Under-20) record and represented the highest clearance in the world in 2017—regardless of age—at the time of his selection. Duplantis has now cleared 18 feet six times outdoors—twice as many as any prep in history. At the state level, he won his third consecutive Louisiana pole vault championship outdoors and also took second in the long jump with a leap of 23-5.5 to lead the Lions to a third-place finish as a team in Class 5A. The 17-year-old's long jump was the nation's No. 147 all-conditions leap among prep competitors in 2017 at the time of his selection. His spectacular outdoor season, which will continue at the European U20 Championships in Italy and the senior IAAF World Championships in London this summer, comes on the heels of a record-breaking indoor campaign in which he became the first prep to clear 19 feet. His vault of 19-1 at the New Balance Nationals Indoor in March also set a World Junior record.

Duplantis is committed to promoting his sport, which remains a niche discipline in U.S. prep track, conducting free clinics for youth athletes in the community, both on pole-vaulting technique and stretching. He also volunteers regularly at jayvee and middle school track meets, offering instruction and acting as a meet official. He is outspoken about the importance of setting goals when he guides and instructs youth athletes. "Mondo' not only raised the standard for high school pole vaulting, but redefined the potential in the event for teenagers around the world," said Erik Boal, editor for Dyestat.com. "He thrives on the biggest stage and there is no telling what possibilities lie ahead for him in the coming year after his assault on the national high school and World Junior record books this spring. Not only has he brought a heightened level of attention to the pole vault in the U.S., but also increased appreciation and respect for the event around the world."

Duplantis has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom and 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.

Duplantis joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Raymond Calais (2015-16, Cecilia High School), Armand Duplantis (2014-15, Lafayette High School), Devin King (2013-14, Jewel M. Sumner High School), Dylan Duvio (2012-13, John Curtis Christian School), Kavahra Holmes (2011-12 & 2010-11, Breaux Bridge High School), Andreas Duplantis (2009-10, Lafayette High School), Richard Sheldon (2008-09, Episcopal High School), Barrett Nugent (2007-08, North Vermillion High School), and Trey Harts (2006-07, Alfred M. Barbe High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Armand 'Mondo' 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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