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**SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Will Knight of Smyrna High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Delaware Football Player of the Year. Knight is the second Gatorade Delaware Football Player of the Year to be chosen from Smyrna 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 field, distinguishes Knight as Delaware's best high school football player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award to be announced in December, Knight joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Mitchell Trubisky (2012-13, Mentor High School, Ohio), Greg Olsen (2002-03, Wayne Hills High School, N.J.), Matthew Stafford (2005-06 Highland Park High School, Texas), Harrison Smith (2006-07 Knoxville Catholic High School, Tenn.), Latavius Murray (2007-08, Onondaga High School, N.Y.), Brock Osweiler (2008-09, Flathead High School, Mont.) and Leonard Fournette (2014-15 & 2012-13, St. Augustine High School, La.).

The 5-foot-9, 205-pound senior running back rushed for 2,164 yards and 32 touchdowns on 217 carries this past season, leading the Eagles to a 10-2 record and their third straight Division I state championship. Knight also caught 10 passes for 229 yards. A three-time First Team All-State selection, he finished a state-record 6,490 yards rushing in his prep career.

Knight has served as a peer mentor in his school and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and an elementary school reading initiative. "Knight is one of the best I've ever coached against," said Rudy Simonetti, head coach at Dover High. "The kid is a flat-out beast. He can run, he can catch, he can throw, he's physical and he can block; he's a true football player."

Knight has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Delaware in the fall of 2018.

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.

Knight joins recent Gatorade Delaware Football Players of the Year Nolan Henderson (2016-17, Smyrna High School), Colby Reeder (2015-16, Salesianum School), Taronn Selby (2014-15, St. Georges Technical High School), Darius Wade (2013-14, Middletown High School), Chris Godwin (2012-13, Middletown High School), Jamie Jarmon (2011-12, Indian River High School), Ryan Kilpatrick (2010-11, Salesianum School), and C. J. Jones (2009-10, A.I. duPont High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Knight 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.