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**UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 Lorenzo Lingard of University High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year. Lingard is the first Gatorade Florida Football Player of the Year to be chosen from University 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 Lingard as Florida'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, Lingard 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 6-foot-1, 195-pound senior running back rushed for 1,701 yards and 26 touchdowns on 207 carries this past season, leading the Titans to a 5-4 record. An All-State selection, Lingard has been selected to play in the 2018 U.S. Army All-American Bowl. He is a three-time All-District honoree and is ranked as the nation's No. 2 running back recruit in the Class of 2018 by Rivals.com and 247Sports.com.

Also a track and field standout, Lingard has volunteered locally on behalf of youth football programs. "Lingard possesses talents and skills that come along maybe once in a coach's career," said Scott Perry, head coach at Lake Mary High. "He's tough, fast, agile and he has such great vision. He's clearly the best player on the field whenever he plays."

Lingard has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at the University of Miami 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.

Lingard joins recent Gatorade Florida Football Players of the Year Shaun Wade (2016-17, Trinity Christian Academy), Tyler Huntley (2015-16, Hallandale High School), Jacques Patrick (2014-15, Timber Creek High School), Sony Michel (2013-14, American Heritage School), Derrick Henry (2012-13, Yulee High School), William Likely (2011-12, Glades Central High School), Jeff Driskel (2010-11, Paul J. Hagerty High School), and Matt Elam (2009-10, William T. Dwyer High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lingard 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/>.