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**SOUTH POINTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2017) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Derion Kendrick of South Pointe High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year. Kendrick is the first Gatorade South Carolina Football Player of the Year to be chosen from South Pointe 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 Kendrick as South Carolina'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, Kendrick 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, 181-pound senior quarterback led the Stallions to a 15-0 record and a fourth-straight Class AAAA state championship this past season. Kendrick completed 186-of-256 passes for 2,693 yards and 30 touchdowns against just six interceptions. He also rushed for 1,195 yards and 19 TDs, throwing and running for a combined 19 touchdowns in five postseason games. The 2016 Herald All-Area Offensive Player of the Year, he concluded his prep football career with 6,134 passing yards, 1,919 rushing yards and 98 total touchdowns.

Kendrick has volunteered locally with Read Across America, an elementary school literacy-outreach program, and he has donated his time as a youth football coach and mentor. "Bottom line, Derion Kendrick is the best player in the state of South Carolina," said Bobby Collins, head coach of Lancaster High. "What makes him dangerous is that he loves to compete. He's the key to their success."

Kendrick has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play football on scholarship at Clemson University 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.

Kendrick joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Football Players of the Year Dakereon Joyner (2016-17, Fort Dorchester High School), Austin Scott (2015-16, Spartanburg High School), J.J. Arcega-Whiteside (2014-15, Dorman High School), Shuler Bentley (2013-14 & 2012-13, James. F. Byrnes High School), Quinshad Davis (2011-12, Gaffney High School), Justin Worley (2010-11, Northwestern High School), and Marcus Lattimore (2009-10, James. F. Byrnes High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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