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**BURKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Shereef Mitchell of Burke High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Mitchell is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Burke 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 Mitchell as Nebraska's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Mitchell joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph HS, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot, 155-pound senior guard led the Bulldogs (12-13) to the district semifinals this past season. Mitchell averaged 24.6 points, 6.4 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 1.9 steals per game. A two-time First Team All-Conference selection, he was a Second Team All-State and Third Team All-Nebraska honoree as a junior.

A mentor for younger students, Mitchell has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports camps. "Mitchell can take over a game in a lot of different ways," said Tony Siske, head coach at Norfolk High. "He can really score, but he's a great passer, a good ball-handler and he plays defense too. He's just a really, really good point guard."

Mitchell has maintained a 3.57 GPA in the classroom. He will play a post-graduate season in prep school before deciding upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Mitchell joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Players of the Year Teddy Allen (2016-17, Boys Town High School), Aguek Arop (2015-16, Omaha South High School), Tyler Hagedorn (2014-15, Norfolk High School), Mitchell Hahn (2013-14, Fremont High School), Josiah Gustafson (2012-13, Millard North High School), Mike Gesell (2011-12 & 2010-11, South Sioux City High School), Elliott Eliason (2009-10 & 2008-09, Chadron), and Wes Eikmeier (2007-08 & 2006-07, Archbishop Bergan Catholic High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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