

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**BRENTWOOD ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® TENNESSEE 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 Darius Garland of Brentwood Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Garland is the second Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Brentwood Academy.

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 Garland as Tennessee'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, Garland 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-2, 175-pound senior point guard led the Eagles to a 25-5 record and a fourth straight Division II Class AA state championship this past season. Garland averaged 27.6 points, 5.0 rebounds, 4.3 assists and 1.7 steals per game. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, he was one of 10 semifinalists for the Naismith Prep Player of the Year. Garland is a two-time Division II Mr. Basketball winner and concluded his prep basketball career with 2,503 points.

Garland has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach and he has donated his time as part of multiple community-service initiatives through the Joe Campbell Service Day project at Brentwood Academy. "Darius has been great this season," said Doug Bontrager, head coach of Father Ryan High. "He scores in multiple ways and is by far one of the best passers I have encountered in my 31 years of coaching. He has all the shots and great vision. He is one of the best players I have ever coached against."

Garland has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University 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.

Garland joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Players of the Year Tyler Harris (2016-17, Cordova High School), Alex Lomax (2015-16, Memphis East High School), Detric Lawson (2014-15, Hamilton High School), Leron Black (2013-14, White Station High School), Austin Nichols (2012-13, Briarcrest Christian High School), Alex Poythress (2011-12, Northeast High School), Adonis Thomas (2010-11, Melrose High School), Joe Jackson (2009-10, White Station High School), John Jenkins (2008-09, Station Camp High School), Leslie McDonald (2007-08, Briarcrest Christian School), and Maurice Miller (2006-07, Raleigh-Egypt High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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

###