FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE LOUISIANA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis of Lafayette High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Duplantis is the second Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lafayette 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 track, distinguishes Duplantis as Louisiana's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Duplantis joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-11, 155-pound senior continued to redefine the pole vault event this season, both in the high school realm and beyond. With a clearance of 19 feet, 5 inches at the Texas Relays this spring, he eclipsed his own national high school record to set a new world outdoor U18 standard. At the state meet, he literally raised the bar again, breaking his own U20 world record by clearing 19-5.5, which represents the No. 1 prep height in history by a margin of more than a foot. The jump ranks as the second-highest clearance in the world in 2018 by a man of any age. His fourth consecutive Louisiana pole vault championship in May helped the Mighty Lions finish eighth as a team at the Class 5A state meet. At February's All Star Perche meet in France, he cleared 19-3.5 to set a new U20 world indoor record with a vault ranks as the world No. 5 height among all males in 2018.

A Swedish citizen, Duplantis is committed to promoting his sport, which remains a niche discipline in U.S. prep track, conducting free clinics for youth athletes in the community, both on pole-vaulting technique and stretching. He also volunteers regularly at jayvee and middle school track meets, offering instruction and acting as a meet official. He is outspoken about the importance of setting goals when he guides and instructs youth athletes. "Although fans and spectators in Louisiana rarely got to see him vault because he spent most of the year traveling the globe to compete against the best in the world, Mondo's desire to vault at both the indoor and outdoor state finals and secure two more championships demonstrated his loyalty to a community that has witnessed his ascent into one of the most exceptional teenage athletes of all-time," said Erik Boal, editor for Dyestat.com. "His World U-20 records are only the foundation for what promises to be an outstanding summer and opportunity to chase the prestigious 6-meter barrier."

Duplantis has maintained a 3.22 GPA in the classroom and has signed a national letter of intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Louisiana State University beginning 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.

Three-time winner Duplantis joins Gatorade Louisiana Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Raymond Calais (2015-16, Lafayette High School), Devin King (2013-14, Jewel M. Sumner High School), Dylan Duvio (2012-13, John Curtis Christian School), Kavahra Holmes (2011-12 & 2010-11, Breaux Bridge High School), Andreas Duplantis (2009-10, Lafayette), Richard Sheldon (2008-09, Episcopal), Barrett Nugent (2007-08, North Vermillion), and Trey Harts (2006-07, A.M. Barbe) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Duplantis 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 us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

###