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OLIVE BRANCH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 15, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **D.J. Jeffries of Olive Branch High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Jeffries is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Olive Branch 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 Jeffries as Mississippi'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, Jeffries joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln High School, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood High School, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington High School, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-8, 220-pound senior forward and guard led the Conquistadors to a 26-8 record and the Class 5A state final this past season. Jeffries averaged 23.3 points, 12.8 rebounds, 5.6 assists and 2.6 blocks per game. A three-time member of the Clarion Ledger Dandy Dozen, he was named both USA TODAY's ALL-USA Mississippi Player of the Year and the Clarion Ledger Player of the Year as a junior. Jeffries is ranked as the nation's No. 23 recruit in the Class of 2019 by ESPN.

A member of his school's Student Leadership Council, Jeffries has volunteered locally as a mentor for at-risk elementary school children. "DJ Jeffries is the most complete player in Mississippi," said Antwayn Patrick, head coach at Holmes County High. "He's got great size, athleticism and an all-around offensive game, and he's a really good defender too. He could score 30 points a game if he wanted to."

Jeffries has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Memphis 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.

Jeffries joins Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Players of the Year Robert Woodard (2017-18 & 2016-17, Columbus High School), Tyson Carter (2015-16, Starkville High School), and Malik Newman (2014-15, Callaway High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Jeffries also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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