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THE HIGH SCHOOL OF SAINT THOMAS MORE STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 16, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Mica Allison of The High School of Saint Thomas More as its 2017-18 Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Player of the Year. Allison is the first Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from The High School of Saint Thomas More.

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 Allison as Illinois' best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Allison joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert HS, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public HS, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View HS, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas HS, Fla.).

The 6-foot-1 senior setter and outside hitter led the Sabers to a 39-3 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Allison recorded 399 assists, 328 kills, 217 digs, 77 blocks and 47 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .482 and a hitting percentage of .341. A member of the USA Volleyball Under-18 Youth National Team, Allison was an American Volleyball Coaches Association Third Team All-American selection. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,439 assists and 1,144 kills.

An active member of Young Life, Allison has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach and as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Mica is unreal," said Krista Pufahl, head coach of Watseka High. "She is so smart and sees the floor well. I have never seen such a versatile player."

Allison maintained a weighted 3.65 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Allison inked a financial-aid agreement that paves the way for her to enroll at Auburn University. She graduated from high school last month and will begin classes in the spring semester.

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.

Allison joins recent Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Players of the Year Charley Niego (2016-17, Mother McAuley High School), Molly Haggerty (2015-16 & 2014-15, St. Francis High School), Ali Frantti (2013-14, Richmond-Burton Community High School), Lauren Carlini (2012-13, West Aurora High School), Alexis Viliunas (2011-12, Lyons Township High School), Kelly Lamberti (2010-11, Cary-Grove High School), Annemarie Hickey (2009-10, Joliet Catholic Academy), Hannah Werth (2008-09, Glenwood High School) and Kelly Murphy (2007-08, Joliet Catholic Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Allison 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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