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**NOVI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MICHIGAN VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 16, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Erin O'Leary of Novi High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Volleyball Player of the Year. O'Leary is the first Gatorade Michigan Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Novi 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 O'Leary as Michigan's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, O'Leary 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 5-foot-10 senior setter led the Wildcats to a 57-3 record and their third straight Class A state championship this past season. O'Leary recorded 1,017 assists, 264 service points (with 79 aces), 218 digs and 150 kills in 89 sets of play. The MIVCA Miss Volleyball as well as Gatorade State Volleyball Player of the Year for the second straight time, O'Leary finished her high school career with a record of 190-11-1.

A youth leader for the Wyldlife Camping program and a reporter for her school newspaper, O'Leary has volunteered as a coach for her local recreation department volleyball team. "I feel like she is one of the best all-around players I have ever seen at the high school level," said Christy Thelen, head coach at DeWitt High.

O'Leary has maintained a weighted 4.12 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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.

Two-time winner O'Leary joins Gatorade Michigan Volleyball Players of the Year Gia Milana (2015-16, Romeo High School), Katherine Carlson (2014-15, Notre Dame Preparatory School), Carli Snyder (2013-14 & 2012-13, Dakota High School), Maddy Doyle (2011-12, Mercy High School), Alex Lovell (2010-11, Marian High School), Rachel Charles (2009-10, Marian High School), Megan Hendrickson (2008-09, Jenison High School) and Molly Coldren (2007-08, Notre Dame Preparatory School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, O'Leary 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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