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**VALLEY VISTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Taylor Chavez of Valley Vista High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Chavez is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Valley Vista 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 Chavez as Arizona's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Chavez joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-10 senior guard led the Monsoon to a 25-6 record and their second consecutive Class 6A state championship this past season. Chavez averaged 23.3 points, 8.0 rebounds, 5.5 assists and 5.3 steals per game. The Southwest Conference Player of the Year, she was also named Class 6A Player of the Year as a junior and was selected to the All-Arizona Team.

A tutor in her school and a member of the Key Club, Chavez has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs. "Taylor Chavez has more of an impact on a game than any player I've ever coached against," said Cory Rojeck, head coach at Millennium High. "She's a great scorer, great defender and her leadership skills on the court are evident at all times."

Chavez has maintained a weighted 4.42 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

Chavez joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Players of the Year Shaylee Gonzales (2016-17, Mesquite High School), Najiyah Pack (2015-16, South Mountain High School), Kristine Anigwe (2014-15, Desert Vista High School), Julia Barcello (2013-14, Seton Catholic Preparatory High School), Courtney Ekmark (2012-13, Saint Mary's Catholic High School), Shilpa Tummala (2011-12, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Promise Amukamara (2010-11, Apollo High School), Rebecca Woodberry (2009-10, Tolleson High School), Davellyn Whyte (2008-09, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Amy Patton (2007-08, McClintock High School), and Kayla Pedersen (2006-07, Red Mountain High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Taylor 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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