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**ROCK ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 Brea Beal of Rock Island High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Beal is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rock Island 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 Beal as Illinois' best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Beal 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1 junior guard averaged 21.9 points, 10.0 rebounds, 3.3 assists, 3.0 blocks and 2.9 assists per game this past season, leading the Rocks (24-8) to the Class 4A Centennial Sectional championship game. The state's Miss Basketball winner as a sophomore, Beal is rated as the nation's No. 6 recruit in the Class of 2019 by Blue Star Basketball Report. She concluded her junior year with 1,943 points in her prep basketball career.

Beal has volunteered locally speaking to elementary school students about good decision making and working toward goals. She has also donated her time as a youth basketball coach. "We did not play against anyone better than Brea," said Megan McCracken, head coach of Alleman High. "She is strong physically, very athletic, hard-working and never takes plays off no matter the opponent."

Beal has maintained a weighted 3.31 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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 Beal joins Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kiara Lewis (2015-16, Whitney M. Young Magnet School), Haley Gorecki (2014-15, William Fremd High School), Tyra Buss (2013-14, Mt. Carmel High School), Jackie Kempf (2012-13, Rolling Meadows High School), Morgan Tuck (2011-12, Bolingbrook High School), Ariel Massengale (2010-11, Bolingbrook High School), Tricia Liston (2009-10, Fenwick High School), Tricia Liston (2008-09, Fenwick High School), Sarah Boothe (2007-08, Warren Township High School), and Brittany Johnson (2006-07, East Richland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Brea 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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