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**CENTRAL PLAINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Emily Ryan of Central Plains High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Ryan is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Central Plains 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 Ryan as Kansas' best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Ryan 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 sophomore guard led the Oilers to a 26-0 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Ryan averaged 34.5 points, 6.8 assists, 6.0 steals and 5.5 rebounds per game. Most Outstanding Player in the Class 2A state tournament, she is a First Team All-State honoree and was named the Sports in Kansas Class 2A Player of the Year as a freshman.

Also a tennis and track standout, Ryan has volunteered locally on behalf of food donation drives, community clean-up initiatives and youth sports programs. "Emily Ryan is the best player we've played against this season, and probably the best player we'll see for the remainder of her high school career," said Andrew Cherry head coach at Ellinwood High. "She can score off the bounce, off the pass, in transition and from the free throw line...anytime the ball is in her hands, the chances of her scoring are pretty good. Defensively she's equally as impressive, and she's also a great competitor and great teammate."

Ryan has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Ryan joins recent Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Robertson (2016-17, McPherson High School), Kendrian Elliott (2015-16, Wichita South High School), Keiryn Swenson (2014-15, Maize High School), Kaylee Page (2013-14, Wamego High School), Katelyn Loecker (2012-13 & 2011-12, McPherson High School), Natalie Knight (2010-11, Olathe South High School), Tiffany Bias (2009-10, Andover Central), Taber Spani (2008-09, Metro Academy), Kendra Frazier (2007-08, Labette County High School), and Morgan Boyd (2006-07, Olathe East High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Emily 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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