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**MOSES BROWN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Oluchi Ezemma of Moses Brown School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Ezemma is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Moses Brown 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 Ezemma as Rhode Island'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, Ezemma 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 5-foot-11 senior forward and center led the Quakers to a 20-5 record and the Open State Tournament championship this past season. Ezemma averaged 19.1 points and 14.0 rebounds per game, including 21 points and 15 rebounds in a 55-51 win over Barrington High in the state final to earn tournament MVP honors. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Ezemma recorded 21 double-doubles on the season. She concluded her prep basketball career with 1,607 points and 1,337 rebounds.

Ezemma has volunteered locally at Camp Eureka, a free summer camp for children who have been witness to domestic violence. A peer leader at Moses Brown, she has also donated her time at a food bank and homeless shelter. "Against us, Oluchi made more high level of difficulty shots that I have seen any other player make this year," said Henry Herbermann, head coach of South Kingstown High. "She rebounds, defends, hustles and plays team basketball. She is obviously an outstanding athlete."

Ezemma has maintained a weighted 3.85 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. She has made a verbal commitment to attend the College of the Holy Cross, where she will play basketball, 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.

Two-time winner Ezemma joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Players of the Year Celia Tomlinson (2015-16, South Kingstown High School), Sarah Middleton (2014-15, Barrington High School), Taylor Buckley (2013-14 & 2012-13, North Kingstown High School), Kailey Fugere (2011-12, Woonsocket High School), Kelly Mannix (2010-11, Barrington High School), Allie Jones (2009-10, South Kingstown High School), Torey Jones (2008-09, La Salle Academy), Brittany Wilson (2007-08, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Meredith Ward (2006-07, Westerly High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Oluchi 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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