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**CHAPARRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® COLORADO VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 14, 2011) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Nicole Dalton of Chaparral High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Player of the Year. Dalton is the second Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Chaparral 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 court, distinguishes Dalton as Colorado's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award announced in December, Dalton joins an elite alumni association of past state volleyball award winners, including USA Volleyball players Kim Glass (2001-02, Horseshoe HS, Penn.), Kim Willoughby (1998-99, 1999-00, Assumption HS, La.) and Ogonna Nnamani (1999-00, University HS, Ill).

The 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter and setter led the Wolverines to a 31-0 record and a second consecutive Class 5A state championship this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year, Dalton amassed 492 kills, 406 assists, 267 digs, 176 service receptions, 62 blocks and 54 service aces while recording a .454 hitting percentage of and .564 kill percentage. Dalton totaled 22 assists, 13 kills, 13 digs and two blocks in the state title sweep of Grandview, capturing Class 5A state tournament Most Valuable Player honors for the second consecutive season. A member of the U.S. Girls' Youth National Team, she compiled 473 kills, 376 digs, 127 assists, 87 blocks and 47 service aces as a junior in 2010.

Dalton has maintained a 3.28 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth volleyball instructor, she has served locally as a companion to the elderly and volunteered on behalf of the Project 600 Christmas party for inner-city children.

"She truly embodies everything that you would desire in a player and an athlete, especially as a teammate," said Kiersta Paul, head coach of rival ThunderRidge High. "Additionally, as an overpowering opponent, she could have easily looked down on those she played against but has never been anything but gracious to both her opponents and teammates. I would argue that she is the most outstanding player in the country and probably the best ever to have played in Colorado. I have lived here my entire life, and we have had some great ones, but Dalton is right there."

Dalton has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Texas beginning in the fall of 2012.

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 ESPNHS and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Dalton, a two-time winner, joins recent Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Players of the Year Morgan Broekhuis (2009-10, Colorado Springs Christian) and Morgan Broekhuis (2008-09, Colorado Springs Christian) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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