

WEST AURORA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE® ILLINOIS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (December 12, 2012) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced **Lauren Carlini of West Aurora High School** as its **2012-13 Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Player of the Year**. Carlini is the first Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Aurora High School. Yesterday Carlini was also awarded the Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award.

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 Carlini as Illinois' best high school volleyball player. Carlini joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, 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-1 senior setter/right side hitter recorded 333 kills, 303 assists, 156 digs, 92 service aces and 50 blocks this past season while posting a kill percentage of .594 and leading the Blackhawks (32-6) to the Class 4A sectional semifinals. The 2012 Chicago Tribune Volleyball Player of the Year and a 2012-13 American Volleyball Coaches Association Under Armour First Team All-American, Carlini earned MVP honors in leading the U.S. Girls Youth National Team to a gold medal at the 2011 USA Volleyball High Performance Championships. She also started for Team USA at that summer's FIVB Girls Youth World Championships in Turkey, and is the No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2013 as rated by PrepVolleyball.com.

Carlini has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Geneva Police Department, the Illinois Math and Science Academy and as a youth volleyball coach.

"Lauren Carlini has a presence on the floor that is beyond compare," said Christine Scheibe, head coach at Joliet Catholic Academy, who coached 2007-08 Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year Kelly Murphy. "Not only is she an excellent setter, she can also hit, block and serve better than most players. Her versatility is what sets her apart from other players."

Carlini has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Wisconsin beginning in the fall of 2013.

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Carlini joins recent Gatorade Illinois Volleyball Players of the Year Alexis Viliunas (2011-12, Lyons Township High School), Kelly Lamberti (2010-11, Cary-Grove High School), Annemarie Hickey (2009-10, Joliet Catholic Academy), Hannah Werth (2008-09, Joliet Catholic Academy) and Kelly Murphy (2007-08, Joliet Catholic Academy) 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.

###