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**MOUNT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OHIO 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 Michelle Strizak of Mount Notre Dame High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year. Strizak is the first Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Notre Dame 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 Strizak as Ohio's best high school volleyball player. Strizak 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 outside hitter recorded 401 kills, 232 digs, 48 service aces and 26 blocks this past season while posting a kill percentage of .428 and leading the Cougars (25-1) to the Division I regional semifinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Strizak is also a 2012-13 American Volleyball Coaches Association Under Armour First Team All-American.

Strizak has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An active parishioner in her church community, she has volunteered locally at a daycare center as a youth basketball and volleyball coach and on behalf of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

"Michelle Strizak is a game-changer," said Denise Harvey, head coach at Mother of Mercy High. "She propels her team and can singlehandedly take over a match. She is effective all over the floor and uses her skills very well. I feel her game has improved over the years and she can and does dominate the scene."

Strizak has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Illinois 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.

Strizak joins recent Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Players of the Year Megan Courtney (2011-12, Archbishop Alter High School), Deme Morales (2010-11, Steele High School), Dani Reinert (2009-10, Ursuline Academy), Lauren Whyte (2008-09, Ursuline Academy) and Missy Harpenau (2007-08, Mother of Mercy) 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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